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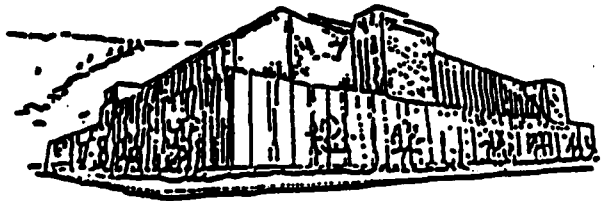
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Sally Woodruff
5/27/99

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**What School Communities Say is Needed in Elementary School Counseling
Programs As Reported in Montana**

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**Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Education**

The University of Montana

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What School Communities Say Is Needed In Elementary School Counseling Programs As Reported In Montana (105 pp.)

Chairperson: Catherine Jenni



This study was a descriptive study that investigated the perceptions of school consumers in three western Montana elementary schools. Examination of the literature revealed that prior studies regarding school counseling programs had employed questionnaires and surveys to gather information. This qualitative study utilized an open-ended interview format to poll three principals, three teachers, three parents and three school counselors. Participants were asked what they felt was needed in a Kindergarten through Grade Three school counseling program. They were also asked what they saw as the future of Kindergarten through Grade Three school counseling programs.

Comparisons of interview responses were made within schools, and within participant roles. It was reported that schools described similar categories when talking about program needs. These categories were students, families, schools, and communities. These four categories represented the parties that interviewees felt had an impact on how a Kindergarten through Grade Three school counseling programs were structured. It was also reported that interview responses may be affected by the role of the interviewee in the school. The future of school counseling programs was often reported in this study as being affected by program funding issues. An additional area of interest that emerged during this study was how community environmental contexts, such as local demographics, might also influence school counseling program structures. Possible implications of the study for several groups are informally noted in the final chapter.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

School counseling developed as a specialty area of the counseling profession, with its roots in the field of psychology. Counseling as an activity and psychology as a theory tended to “merge” into a guidance system for students that operated in an educational environment. School guidance activities in American schools were initially molded by the needs of society to maintain an educated work force through industrial and technological advances. Social, educational, political, and economic trends in our society have continued to encourage adjustment and evolution in school counseling programs to meet the needs of the students being educated in schools at any given time (Paisley & Borders, 1995).

Beginning in the late 1800's, school guidance and counseling programs were created and driven by a need for vocational placement of students at the high school level (Paisley & Borders, 1995). School guidance programs advised students in career options. During the 1930's, an attempt was made to organize guidance in the school setting with the identification of three main employment-type guidance areas: educational; vocational; and personal-social services (Campbell & Dahir, 1997).

The addition of educational and personal-social services shifted the balance of school guidance to more than just vocational guidance. However, the concern for work placement, both military and civilian, continued to shape school counseling programs through World War II, and through the focus on scientific careers in the 1950's (Faust,

1968). Faust also noted that in the 1950's, the focus of school counseling programs began a definite shift from vocational guidance to the educational-personal growth of students.

In order to meet the educational and personal growth needs of students, counselors were prepared to move into more day-to-day activities with students. Initial efforts to have counseling occur directly in the classrooms of public high schools were not generally supported by the public. Perhaps due to the use of teacher-counselors who were expected to deliver what Faust calls "homeroom guidance" (p. 22), teachers were expected to conduct guidance activities in their homerooms without being given adequate training to successfully engage students in consultation and counseling. The situation was frustrating for all involved and the public questioned the credibility of school counseling activities at the secondary level.

About 25 years ago, educators began to consider placement of counselors in elementary schools as well as in high schools to provide additional guidance to younger students to improve educational success. Prior to this time, elementary teachers had also generally been responsible for "counseling and guidance" of their classroom students (Wittmer, 1993).

The continued negative public perception of "homeroom guidance" may have led to some difficulty in establishing elementary school counseling programs, because counseling was seen as being primarily educational in nature. It was not conceptualized as a means of addressing the individual psychological needs of students. Counselors may have been perceived as educators, but not perceived as having a mental health focus. The role of counselor as educator was also reflected in higher education counselor

certification programs, which provided counseling endorsements only to experienced teachers by way of approximately one semester (12-15 credits) of graduate work in counseling.

Professions have growth periods and periods of stability. Elementary school counseling is proceeding through its own developmental stages. School counseling programs were originally considered as traditionalist programs, which were greatly influenced by secondary school guidance and counseling programs (Faust, 1968). The traditionalist model was followed by a neotraditionalist model which emphasized preventive interventions with at-risk students. The next stage was the developmental model, which considered the developmental requirements of all students. The current promotion of comprehensive, developmental school counseling programs takes counseling back into the classroom with specific curricula (Wittmer, 1993). Currently, however, these programs are conceived of as educational with a mental health focus.

School counseling programs continue to wrestle with identifying their role in public education. It appears there are several influences that have impacted the process of defining the structure and the content of elementary school counseling programs: social issues; government regulations; professional organizations; training programs and certification agencies; and schools themselves (parents/community, teachers/ staff, administrators, and students). These influences interact to create the programs which school counselors use to identify their role. While some of these factors have been present since the creation of school counseling duties - such as social issues - professional

organizations and training programs, for example, have become more influential in shaping programs and the role of the school counselor in recent years.

Statement of the Problem

Unclear program structure and unclear program content affect school counseling as a defined profession in public schools. Some programs are perceived as serving only troubled children, while others are perceived as providing proactive, comprehensive, developmental guidance to all students. Other programs might be perceived as doing something entirely different. The role is loosely defined.

Economic hardships currently affect almost every school and school district. Elementary school counseling programs may be vulnerable to school budget cuts because they lack a clear sense of identity and mission (Coll & Freeman, 1997). Programs that benefit the highest number of students in a school are acknowledged to be responsive to the needs of the those affected by the education process when school budgets are created and justified.

Clearly defined school counseling programs would allow for the development of measurable counseling outcomes. Measurable outcomes would allow consumers (including the community, parents, staff, and students) to review and assess program goals and accomplishments. Involving consumers when identifying elementary school counseling program structure and content promotes a process to create useful and beneficial counseling programs for all parts of the school community.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to provide information about the perceived needs of a kindergarten through grade three counseling program, as reported by principals, teachers, parents, or counselors. Although there have been several professional articles reporting results from staff-ranking of pre-selected school counseling program tasks or roles (Colbert, 1996; Miller, 1989; Morris & Hueschen, 1990; Morse & Russell, 1988; Ritchie, 1989), there is a lack of research studies that have used interview methods in public elementary schools to record the personal perceptions of principals, teachers, parents, and counselors regarding needs to be met by counseling activities. The secondary purpose of the study was to provide such information from a qualitative, interview based data source with a focus on counseling programs in the primary grades.

Significance of the Study

Elementary school counseling programs are relatively new additions to public schools, though they have been discussed over several decades. Programs were influenced by several factors, such as the difficulties encountered with “home-room guidance” and implementation of the goal of educational success for younger students. Elementary programs were created to support the growth of students, in contrast to the vocational guidance programs of high schools. Comprehensive elementary counseling programs address children’s needs before they become problems in higher grade levels. Prevention and intervention activities are of potential interest to anyone affected by the development and behavior of children.

There are a number of influences that affect how elementary programs are defined, but as yet, some of their viewpoints are not well articulated. Government regulations, professional organization position statements, training program curricula, state certification policies, and school programs are all shaped, in part, by the perceptions of those who participate in school counseling programs, either as the consumers or as the school counselors who coordinate and deliver services. This study investigated some of these perceptions for the purpose of more clearly defining the role of the elementary school counselor.

Federal and state school lobbying groups may gain information regarding the issues affecting Western Montana elementary schools. This, in turn, will be useful for creating public policy that supports our communities and schools. Principals, teachers, school parents, and school counselors will be interested in the way that their cohorts perceived program needs, and each school that participated will be interested in how their school perceived their specific school needs in relationship to others.

Higher education certification agencies and university training programs may use results to compare responses from program “consumers” with the courses required for school counseling degrees and certification requirements. University students who are gathering information about elementary school counseling programs for their own career placement decisions will be interested in how some consumers view program needs.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to fulfill the purposes of the study:

1. What do elementary school principals, teachers, parents and counselors say is

needed in a kindergarten through grade three public school counseling program?

2. Are interviewee responses influenced by identifiable environmental contexts? If so, what might the contexts be?

Definitions of Terms

1. **Ancillary counseling duties**: For the purposes of this study, this term means school duties that are non-counseling duties, such as disciplining students, or managing programs that benefit the school, but are not the focus of school counselor training programs.
2. **Comprehensive school counseling programs**: For the purposes of this study, this term means the programs delivered and/or coordinated by school counselors that reach all students in preparing them to live, learn and work in the future. The needs deemed appropriate for the developmental age of students are considered, and programs are designed with both prevention activities and intervention activities for the whole child, every child. The program consists of the program content which is the focus of activities, along with the program structure chosen to provide program content (Gysbers, 1995).
3. **Elementary school counselors** - For the purposes of this study, the terms counselor, elementary school counselor and school guidance counselor are interchangeable.
4. **Parenting education** - This term means those programs and classes offered to parents through the school counseling program to empower parents in their role of child-rearing.

5. **Program consumers/constituents** - This term means those parties whom counselors engage in school counseling activities. For the purposes of this study, the program consumers have been identified as administrators, parents/community, teachers/staff, and students.
6. **Program content**: This term means the needs, goals, factors and types of issues that are addressed in a school counseling program.
7. **Program structure**: This term means the possible strategies used to implement a program. Possible strategies identified and defined for this study are set out below.
 - a. **Appraisal** - activities which provide information that helps plan, monitor, and manage student learning.
 - b. **Consultation** - providing information, collaboration, and support to teachers/administrators/staff/parents, and receiving feedback on the use of specific strategies.
 - c. **Coordination** - serving as a liaison between program consumers in working toward the goals of the counseling program.
 - d. **Counseling** - meeting with students in either a small group or on an individual basis, to assist them in expressing concerns encountered while addressing personal or school tasks, and supporting them in possible resolutions.
 - e. **Crisis intervention** - intervening with individual students to stabilize an environment or the emotional state of an individual in an emergency situation.
 - f. **Curriculum** - organized learning activities that provide knowledge of normal

growth and development toward life skills, and that promote positive mental health. Delivered in classrooms as classroom guidance.

g. **Referral** - contacting a source outside of the school with a request for additional service support for normal or crisis occasions.

8. **Traditional counseling program**: This term means a counseling program that is mainly crisis oriented and problem centered, and tends to focus on children with problems.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

School Counseling and Program Roles

School counselor roles have gone through developmental stages, and continue to evolve. In the early stages, teachers were utilized as the classroom counselor. In schools that lacked a certified school counselor, teachers “guided” their students through problems with communication, reading, and arithmetic (Willey & Dunn, 1964). Teachers also were expected to recognize the “maladjustment” of students not functioning in a normal way (p.279).

Secondary school counseling programs have set the tone for junior high school and elementary school counseling programs. Armor (1969), set out counselor functions that were self reported by secondary school counselors in a Boston area sample (p. 54). The identified roles (in descending rank-order) were:

1. Individual student counseling sessions
2. Clerical and paperwork.
3. Parent conferences.
4. Teaching and administration.
5. Testing.
6. Administrative conference.
7. Group guidance.
8. Supervising guidance program.
9. Job placement.

Initially, elementary school counseling programs borrowed heavily from traditional secondary school guidance paradigms (Faust, 1968). As elementary programs proceeded through identity development, a shift was made from the traditional secondary model (which tended to be crisis oriented), through a neotraditional model (prevention/crisis oriented), to a developmental model (developmental/learning orientation), (p. 9), and now into a comprehensive model (whole student/whole school model) (Wittmer, 1993; p. 7). Although programs seem to operate in one or another of these models, and often in several models at the same time, there continues to be debate and discussion regarding a definition of what elementary school counseling programs should contain. The nature of the role of the elementary school counselor remains exceedingly unclear (Hays & Johnson, 1984; Hanna & Bemak, 1997).

As described in Elementary School Counseling: A Blueprint for Today and Tomorrow (Worzbyt & O'Rourke, 1989), the main purpose of an elementary school counseling program "is to enhance and improve the learning environment of the school so that each child in the elementary school has an opportunity to learn to the best of his/her capacity" (p. 13). This was to be accomplished by recognizing the school-based obstructions which limit a student's freedom to learn, and creating ways to remove the obstructions. Obstructions can be environmental, such as classroom practices, and/or interpersonal, such as problems of individual students. Program components (Worzbyt & O'Rourke, 1989; pp.15,16), which are considerably different than the nine functions described above, were:

1. **Recognizing early indicators of social maladjustment, child abuse, and neglect, and other physical and emotional problems requiring immediate attention and referral services.**
2. **Providing information and an understanding of the world of work; the value of a work oriented society; career awareness; career development; and the interactions of business, industry and government.**
3. **Coordinate and assist school personnel in conducting classroom activity sessions for developing thinking, decision making, and interpersonal skills; physical coordination and dexterity functions; self understanding and utilization of self abilities; and developing and practicing coping and management strategies designed to benefit self and society.**
4. **Provide information and coordinate positive home/school/community relations designed to recognize and support cooperation among and between all people regardless of color, religion, ethnic origin, age, sex, and belief.**
5. **Conduct teacher preservice and inservice training sessions on such diverse topics as individualized learning styles, child growth and development, classroom management, group dynamics, child self-management techniques, and curriculum design using counseling strategies, for the purpose of enhancing the teaching/learning environment.**
6. **Contribute to the growth and development of positive and productive family living environments by providing information and conducting parent groups that focus on such topics as child rearing strategies, child discipline, raising your child's self**

esteem, improving family communications, sex education, home/school networking, and life in a non-traditional family setting.

7. Coordinate the counseling program and develop the necessary networking linkages between the counseling program and all those who must understand and contribute to its success (administrators, board members, parents, teachers, school specialists, and community supporters).
8. Coordinate and manage a comprehensive counseling program that not only provides a depth of service, but is also longitudinally sound in that the program delivers services that cut across all grade levels K-12.
9. Infuse the total counseling program into every aspect and dimension of the learning environment, so that program concepts and understandings become a way of life and contribute significantly to helping each child become all he/she is capable of becoming.

Elementary school counseling programs that have made the shift to comprehensive program models have increased nationwide during the last two decades. Descriptions of the status of comprehensive guidance and counseling programs were made by Sink and MacDonald (1998) They reported that by March, 1997, twenty-four states had some type of comprehensive model in place statewide. Ten states had models "in progress". two states had program guidelines, seven states encouraged models in their school districts, and the remaining states had reported minimal or no progress toward the development and achievement of a comprehensive program. Only Maryland mandated a

comprehensive model for individual school districts. Montana was listed as leaving the designation of program models to individual school districts.

Professional groups also define counseling roles. Professional organizations offer professional seminars regarding new knowledge in the field of school counseling to their members. Knowledge gained through professional training shapes what new skills counselors add to their programs (Walz & Bleuer, 1993).

The American School Counseling Association (ASCA) was established in 1952 as a professional organization for school counselors. Its parent organization, The Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) continues to provide support through ASCA for school counselors and continues to gather statistical information regarding school counseling (Sheeley, 1990).

ASCA periodically updates school counseling program definitions, goals, and program components. They have proposed national standards for school counseling programs in an effort to identify what elements a school counseling program should contain. ASCA states that adopting and implementing national standards will change the way school counseling programs are designed and delivered, and will provide a working definition of a responsive school counseling program for school staff, counselors, parents, and students (ASCA, 1997). Current ASCA standards serve to facilitate student development in three broad areas: Academic development; career development; and personal/social development (see Appendix A for complete standards). Professional organizations offer professional seminars on school counseling matters to their members, which also affects the way counselors design their programs.

Individual schools and school districts concretely define their own requirements for delivery of counseling services, within the guidelines established by their state. Some counseling departments in elementary schools are attempting to identify and establish counseling goals that are compatible with a comprehensive model that involves parents and communities in education students with age-appropriate activities for personal and social mental health. In one example, the Oneida, Tennessee, Elementary Guidance and Counseling Department stated that they assist all elementary students by “teaching skills that will enhance each students’ character, educational performance and social development” through classroom curriculum that partners parents, teachers, and counselors (Bilbrey, 1997). A search of school web sites on the Internet revealed a growing number of schools recognizing the importance of introducing and defining their school counseling programs.

Montgomery County, Virginia, elementary counselors were governed by a state mandate specifying that a majority of the work day be spent in actual counseling, with the remainder of the work day spent in consultation, classroom guidance, and coordination of educational services - their “4 C’s of Counseling (counseling, consultation, classroom, coordination) (Hughston, Beeks & Ferrell, 1997). Montgomery County defined counseling as working with individual students, parents, and small groups. Consultation was defined as interactions occurring between counselors and teachers and parents. Coordination of services was defined as counselors representing school personnel in contacts with community agencies, and classroom guidance was defined as counselors following lessons from a curriculum that is developmental and based upon Virginia

Standards of Learning. Elementary school counselors in Virginia had been concerned about state legislation that moved to eliminate counselors at the elementary school level in an attempt to reallocate education dollars to basic academic courses. They organized an intense state-congress lobbying effort to communicate with their legislators. At this time, individual school districts decide whether there will be elementary counselors in their schools.

The Luray Elementary School Guidance Services in Kansas stated that their program responsibilities were coordinating classroom guidance programs, consulting with staff and parents, and counseling individuals and small groups (Shentel, 1997). Their classroom guidance activities were developmental in nature, and were not advertised as being therapeutic counseling. The Republic, Missouri, counseling web site (Guidance, 1998), stated that the Missouri Model Guidance Program stipulated that elementary school counselors spend 35% of their time in classroom instruction.

Elementary school counselors appear to have a different role than counselors in middle schools and secondary schools. In a study conducted by Hardesty and Dillard (1994), a sample of 369 Kentucky school counselors completed a questionnaire that asked counselors to estimate how much time they spent in 17 activities. Results indicated that elementary counselors reported higher levels of activity than middle school and secondary school counselors in the coordination and consultation areas, have more interaction with parents, families, teachers, and community agencies, and perform less administrative-like activities (scheduling and paperwork).

Social/Political Issues and School Counseling Programs

School counseling programs have been influenced by social, economic, and political trends (Paisley & Borders, 1995). Social pressures, such as divorce, poverty, peer violence, child abuse, and substance abuse impact the way children interact and perform at school. School counselors, through school counseling programs, are most often the trained employees within a school that must respond directly to the impact of these factors (Diedrich, 1968). What follows is a quick review of social and political influences on today's youth.

Urie Bronfenbrenner (1986) taught a multi disciplinary course for several years at Cornell University entitled "Human Development in Post-Industrial Societies". He gathered comparative data from different nations to guide higher education curriculum decisions to address alienation of youth. His findings indicated some startling statistics: the United States has the highest rate of teenage pregnancy of any industrialized nation; the U.S. divorce rate is the highest in the world; the U.S. is the only industrialized society where nearly one-fourth of infants and preschool children live in families with incomes below the national poverty line; and the U.S. has the highest incidence of alcohol and drug abuse in the world among adolescents.

The Children's Defense Fund reported in their 1998 United States profile that every day in America six children commit suicide, thirteen children are homicide victims, 280 children are arrested for violent crimes, 1,403 babies are born to teen mothers, 2,430 babies are born into poverty, 5,753 children are arrested, and 8,470 children are reported as abused or neglected. In the U.S. in 1998, 11.3 million children were without health

insurance and 14.5 million children lived in poverty. The same organization reported 1998 statistics for Montana that revealed that every thirty-nine minutes a child was reported abused or neglected, every six hours a baby was born to a teenage mother, and every eighteen days a child or youth was killed by a gun. A comparison of state and national statistics show that Montana statistics parallel those found in the nation at large.

Children born into poverty are often exposed to a greater number of risk factors. Families experiencing poverty are under great stress, with frequent instances of substance abuse and child abuse and neglect (Downing, 1998). From 1992 to 1996, Montana had a higher rate of children under the age of six living at, near poverty or below the poverty line than the U.S. or than any neighboring state.

Students sometimes begin experimentation with drugs in elementary school, with early experimentation often leading to abuse and addiction to substances in teen years (Gerler, 1991). Child abuse and neglect affects all children, and appears to be prevalent in our society. Elementary school classrooms are often the most stable setting neglected and abused children experience (Gerler, 1991). Classrooms can be the places where education regarding substance abuse and child abuse is delivered to teachers and students. If we wait until students are in junior high school or high school to address societal issues, we may have lost the opportunity to help children achieve their potential (Glossoff & Koprowicz, 1990).

These findings raise specialization issues for all counselors and counseling programs. School counseling programs can be responsible for addressing many social issues at a time and in a place that children customarily receive instruction-the public

school-and can assist in mitigating many social concerns for the health and safety of our youth and their families. Federal and state policies are known to be partly generated in response to social pressures, and shape how school counseling programs respond.

Legislation Affecting School Counseling

The *National Defense Education Act* (NDEA) of 1956 provided federal funds to train school counselors as student-guides into more intensive academic programs for technology (Hays & Johnson, 1984). NDEA was created in response to the “race to space” era of the 1950's, and was generated by a national business concern that students in American schools were not internationally competitive in technological sciences.

The *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) was signed into law and funded in 1965 to provide support for school districts in meeting the changing needs of their students. It has been reauthorized and amended every five years, and now contains funding for safe and drug free schools, and for parent resources, among many other areas. ESEA is before the U.S. House and the Senate in 1999 for reauthorization and amendments, if needed. There was a bill introduced in both the U.S. House and Senate in 1993 called the *Elementary School Counseling Demonstration Act* (ESCDA). The Act provided a structure and an appropriation method for funding elementary counselors at the state/local level. Although ESCDA has not been signed into law, it has generated interest among counselors to gather information at the state level that may resurrect it (Roberts, 1996).

In 1994, the U.S. Congress enacted H.R. 1804, also known as *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* (Goals 2000). The Act calls for voluntary national standards that provide, in

part, federal funding for schools to meet several goals. The goals that affect school counseling programs address academic success, responsible citizenship, substance abuse in schools, violence in schools, and the formation of partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional and academic growth of children.

While these are examples of federal policies that influence school counseling programs, state policies also have an impact. Some states mandate, through both legislative and administrative action, that their local school districts provide guidance and counseling services to their students (Farrell, 1998). Twenty states, and the District of Columbia mandate the provision of guidance and counseling services in public elementary and/or secondary schools. Eighteen states and the District of Columbia mandate the provision of guidance and counseling at all grade levels. Through the Board of Public Education in 1989, Montana mandated counseling at all grade levels, and calls for a counselor/student ratio of 1:400. Although some states provide funding for their mandates (i.e. Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa), Montana does not. In addition, Montana has a provision that allows a deferral-option of the mandate to school districts, an option that has been widely used recently in the face of declining budgets.

Certification Requirements Affecting School Counseling

Individual states also have certification requirements for school counselors. All states require graduate education in guidance and counseling as an entry-level prerequisite for state credentialing as a professional school counselor, and thirty-nine states and the District of Columbia require attainment of a master's degree in counseling and guidance,

or a related field (p. 2). The Montana Board of Public Education Administrative Rules (1994) required completion of a master's degree in counseling or the equivalent (10.58.512), and these standards apply today, though they are presently under revision. Montana certification also requires specific course work in many areas, including curriculum, collaboration, consultation, testing, and individual, family and group counseling (see Appendix B).

Montana accreditation standards also required local school districts to develop a written counseling curriculum, and to provide assessment measures to show the effectiveness of the school counseling program. The Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) published a revised guideline manual in 1992 that was intended to assist school districts in planning their programs. The manual was developed by Sherry Jones through a 1991 Christa McAuliffe Fellowship.

Montana guidelines noted a shift from a traditional counseling model to a developmental model, and set out four areas for a comprehensive school counseling program model: personal; social; educational; and career/life planning. The Montana manual also established program components in the areas of guidance curriculum, individual planning, responsive services, and system support. Local districts were encouraged to adapt the information to local conditions, such as student needs, staff's knowledge and expertise, available resources, and priorities of the district.

Accreditation Programs and School Counseling Programs

Training standards and accreditation agencies ensure preparation of competent school counselors (Clawson, 1993). Universities maintain professional training programs

through compliance with specific state certification requirements, and through adherence to specific standards of accreditation agencies, including national accreditation standards. The emphasized skills that a counselor is trained with may affect the types of programs that are created when that counselor becomes employed.

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) developed and implemented the first standards for the training of school counselors in 1985. CACREP standards effective in 1994 call for counselors-in-training to experience certain curricular and supervised experiences (Wittmer, 1993). These standards call for experiences and demonstrated knowledge in eight core areas: Human growth and development; social and cultural foundations; helping relationships; groups; career and lifestyle development; appraisal; research and program evaluation; and professional orientation (see Appendix C for partial standards). Many school counseling preparation programs are not accredited by CACREP (Hollis & Wantz, 1990).

School counseling preparation programs are also reviewed for curriculum accreditation standards by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). At the University of Montana, for example, NCATE standards satisfy State accreditation standards, although they conduct program evaluations separately.

Both CACREP and NCATE are beginning revision of their standards in 1999. The agencies are seeking input from school counselors as to what knowledge and skills school counselors think are needed to prepare them for work. The areas of concern are whether counselor preparation programs should emphasize knowledge-based information or

competency-based information, including classroom management skills (Bergin, 1999). Revision of standards may affect the way elementary school counseling programs are structured by changing competence areas of school counselors coming through revised programs.

Schools and School Counseling Programs

Ellis (1990) believes that schools have personalities, just like individuals. There is also evidence that suggests a strong sense of community in elementary schools benefits all who are involved with the school (Royal & Rossi, 1997). School counseling programs can reflect the personality of the school, or the nature of the school community, in the components of the counseling program developed in particular schools or school districts. Several different methods for how schools individualize programs for the school personality or school community are in the literature.

School teams are one way that the personality, or nature, of the school community is expressed. Schools can individualize their counseling programs through collaborative teams that make decisions about how their school's counseling program will be structured. Site-Based Management (SBM) is a term that describes a collaboration among all parties affected by school management-parents, staff, school boards, students, community members-to share decision-making responsibilities for school success. SBM teams of school personnel, parents and the community are responsible for making school program decisions, including the creation of counseling programs.

Total Quality Management (TQM) principles of business-management theories are being embraced by schools and school districts (Oswald, 1996). Teams and

subcommittees, made up of principals, teachers, parents and counselors, work together to make program decisions and to develop curricula. Team relationships need to be collegial, cooperative, and interdependent, and there are many opportunities for use of TQM in developing school counseling programs (Allen, 1994). In a TQM process, the question would be asked “What do you want in a school counseling program and how can I help you get it?” (Perry, 1992).

“Invitational Learning” is a term coined by William Purkey (Ellis, 1990) and refers to collaborative decisions made by teachers, students, and parents about the programs affecting them. Again, school counseling programs are shaped by “inviting” others to have input.

Replete in the literature are two types of collaboration discussed when referring to school counseling programs. There is a type of collaboration that uses team members equally to create counseling programs (e.g., SBM and TQM) and there is a type of collaboration that utilizes the counselor as a “team leader” in shaping programs and in delivering program services (Invitational Learning).

While not all schools operate within an SBM, TQM, or Invitational Learning model, schools do have a structure in place for making program decisions, and most schools expect their school counselors to have the skills to provide leadership to the school-community partnership.

Ancillary Duties and School Counselors

Another aspect of schools and school counseling programs are the ancillary duties that counselors conduct. Elementary school counselors report that most of their time is

spent performing individual counseling tasks for students with special needs, and that a portion of their day is spent performing quasi-administrative duties (Morse & Russell, 1988). Quasi-administrative duties are duties that are non-counseling in nature, such as substitute teaching for absent teachers, being a school disciplinarian, and/or evaluating classroom teachers (Studer & Allton, 1996). Ancillary duties can make it difficult for counseling programs to meet the needs of all students, can affect how a counselor participates on school teams, and can obscure their professional identity in the school community (Ritchie, 1989; Murray, 1995). Non-counseling duties interfere with other counseling duties, and can lead to role overload and job “burnout” due to multiple roles performed by school counselors, and due to the misunderstandings that can occur among consumers in the school community who are trying to understand the counseling programs in place in their schools (Stickel, 1991).

Administrators and School Counseling Programs

Superintendents and/or principals are generally the managers of the school building, staff, and programs, including the counseling program employed in their schools. In a 1987 study (Miller, 1989), elementary school principals, teachers, and parents were surveyed to determine what they think about the relevance of elementary school counseling functions in their schools (teacher and parent results will be cited below). Principals were the primary target group of the study, and revealed strong support (70% to 90%) for 24 of 28 functions listed on a questionnaire. Some specific results follow. The researcher provided these results in detail because they indicate and compare the

preferences of principals, teachers, and parents in similar categories utilized in this current study. The results were also indicative of the plethora of duties that elementary school counselors perform.

In the category of “development/career guidance” principals supported healthy psychological development through the promotion of physical, social and emotional awareness of self and others; positive interpersonal relationships, listening to others, and making friends; decision making and awareness of value judgments without undue pressure from peers; and social development through classroom guidance activities, peer counseling and tutoring, and school and community volunteer services. They did not give strong support to assisting a classroom group to understand the relationship between personal qualities, education, and the world of work.

In the category of “consulting” principals supported assisting and conferring with teachers on learning and with individualizing instruction for Individualized Education Plans (IEPs); leading parenting groups; helping parents understand students’ developmental characteristics and their supportive role in learning; planning/conducting training programs for teachers regarding their guidance role in the classroom; and serve as a staff resource in mental health instruction and referral concerns. Principals supported all functions in this category.

In the “counseling” category, principals supported meeting with students to address a developmental need (e.g., social skills or decision making); meeting with a student to help resolve or remediate a problem (e.g., family stress or peer conflict); working with a family to meet a student’s developmental needs or help with a problem; and facilitating a

small counseling group to help resolve or remediate a conflict. Principals did not strongly support helping a student with a learning problem or counseling a staff member regarding a personal school issue.

In the “evaluation and assessment” category, principals supported assisting student(s) or parent(s) to use academic and test information appropriately, and using inventories and/or informal observations to assess students’ developmental needs and maturity (moral reasoning, ego development, and social development). Principals did not strongly support planning and conducting research on student characteristics, needs assessment, and guidance program evaluation.

In the “guidance program development, coordination, and management” category, principals supported formulating guidance and counseling goals or policies with a guidance committee; organizing a systematic school plan to facilitate structured guidance sessions to assist students with mastery of developmental tasks of childhood; participating in staff meeting regarding guidance issues; interpreting the guidance program to others (e.g., give talks or preparing news articles); and coordinating and interpreting other pupil support services. There were no functions in this category not strongly supported by principals.

A 1995 study by Studer and Allton (1996) indicated that counselors in public, parochial, and vocational K-12 schools did not feel that their counseling programs were understood very well by the school principal. In this same study, principals responded that they felt they had a good understanding of and supported the counseling program. They saw little difference between actual and ideal activities.

Ideal counseling roles and actual roles were compared in a study done in Nebraska in 1989 (Ponec, 1990, as cited in Dickel, 1994). Elementary school principals rated items on a survey created from previous research and from then-current counseling curriculums and services. The survey instrument contained fifteen categories: administrative duties; career education/awareness; classroom guidance/curriculum; community relations; evaluation; group counseling; inservices for teachers; non-guidance activities (e.g., lunchroom); parent assistance; research; student advocate; student appraisal/assessment; and student referral. The first four highest ranked categories on both the ideal list and the actual list were the same: 1) individual counseling; 2) classroom guidance; 3) group counseling; 4) student advocate. The fifth category on the ideal list was parent assistance, and on the actual list it was student assessment. The remainder of the ideal and actual fifteen categories were rated fairly consistently.

A 1996 (Cormany & Brantley) interview of William Brantley, a recently retired assistant superintendent in a Pennsylvania school district, by Robert Cormany, a student services advisor for the Pennsylvania Department of Education, presented several different issues regarding administrators and school counseling programs. The article did not state whether these issues related to any particular grade level. Brantley felt that counselors needed to become more involved in discipline by helping the principal sort out the facts and then advocating for the child.

He also thought they should become more involved in curriculum development so that they can know how to support students by knowing what is being taught. A third area in which he wished to see more counselor involvement was in educating parents and

staff on issues and trends relevant to the student body's welfare, both in the classroom and at home. He saw the following as additional needs: conflict resolution and peer mediation; participation in student assistance programs; developing closer ties with business and industry for career development skills; using more technology in counseling sessions; and having an awareness of how retraining in industrial downsizing affects families.

Several weaknesses of school guidance programs were mentioned. Brantley felt that there was a lack of awareness of the resources available within the community. He also felt that more skills were needed for implementing group activities. He saw other weaknesses as lack of time spent in the classroom, lack of sensitivity to legal issues, and too little time spent on career development skills. In addition, he felt that in order for school counselors to survive in schools, they must make themselves indispensable, particularly with educational reform, become literate in technology, and be prepared to change with a changing student population. He also saw school counselor/program survival dependant on a change of schools to site-based management, be prepared to meet challenges to program components that involve values, decision making, self-esteem, and outcome-based education. Communication with the out-of-school community and keeping professional skills current were also keys to survival.

Brantley believed that administrator support for counseling programs could be gained by keeping the administrator informed of counseling activities, and by protecting the administrator from unpleasant surprises-with forming partnerships with the administrator. Also helpful would be to establish regular meeting times with the

immediate supervisor, volunteer to help with special programs as a team-player, develop close ties with building staff, and to get out of the office and stay visible.

Teachers and School Counseling Programs

Teachers are responsible for providing the climate and the means for supporting the academic and the “whole child” growth of the students in their classes. School counseling programs offer a menu of services from which teachers can select practices to complement their classroom purposes.

In the aforementioned study by Miller (1989), a survey of elementary school principals, teachers and parents, teachers ranked all but one of the same twenty-four out of the twenty-eight functions the same as principals. The one exception was item 24, “Formulate guidance and counseling goals or policies with a guidance committee”. This function was rated lower by teachers than by principals. Another function that concerned planning and conducting research on student characteristics, needs assessment, and guidance program evaluation, received a slightly higher rating by teachers than by principals.

Morris and Hueschen (1990) sent questionnaires to one teacher and one counselor at each of 117 public schools in Wisconsin. All grade levels were represented. In this study, the highest counseling role ranked by teachers was “consultation with teachers about individual student concerns”. The second highest role ranked by teachers was “consultation with parents” (teachers saw counselors as being more involved in this activity than counselors ranked themselves). The third teacher-ranked role was

“individual counseling with students”, and the fourth role ranked by teachers was “consultation with administrators”.

Teacher concerns regarding classroom management in elementary schools was investigated by Martin and Baldwin (1996). The researchers suggested several ways elementary school counseling programs could assist in classroom management.

Consultation with teachers about individual students concerns was supported by both the Morris and Hueschen (1990) study and the Miller (1989) study. Martin and Baldwin (1996) identified several things that counselors could do to assist in the area of consultation: coordinate teacher-to-teacher mentoring programs; provide support groups for new teachers to meet with other new teachers for the purpose of venting and problem-solving; provide individual consultation to teachers; and provide a collection of reference material covering classroom management for the entire faculty.

Parents/Families and School Counseling Programs

Parents and families trust that schools will provide experiences that will add to the development and growth of their children. School counselors, school administrators and school staff are very aware of the multiple academic and social issues affecting students and their families. The “traditional family” has all but disappeared in America (Gerler, 1991). Divorce and single-parent homes are now more the norm than the exception.

Parent/school partnerships are formed to provide support and safety-nets for children and their families. When teachers and counselors collaborate to provide classroom curricula for supporting children in changing families, and for implementing parent education programs, the parent/school partnership is strengthened (Keys & Bemak,

1997). Comprehensive, developmental counseling programs provide preventive curricula and developmentally appropriate interventions for every student in the school.

Parents are a group of school counseling “program consumers” or “stakeholders” (Scruggs, Wasielewski, & Ash, 1999) that must be involved when structuring elementary school counseling programs. Miller (1989), found that parent support levels for counseling program functions were more like that of the principals than that of the teachers. They showed strong support for twenty-three out of the twenty-eight functions. One exception between strong principals’ support and strong parental support for counseling program functions was the medium level of endorsement by parents for the counselor helping the teacher individualize classroom instruction to meet special student needs with an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Individual students can exhibit behavioral, social, or emotional problems in school. Students are frequently referred by parents, teachers, and administrators to the school’s counseling program. The first decision that needs to be made is which groups should participate in the counseling program (Lewis, 1996). In considering a school problem. Lewis states that there are at least three primary subsystems that should be assessed: The family; the school; and the subsystem formed by family and school interactions.

Colbert (1996), reported the interaction of parents, elementary school counselors, and elementary schools in a process model that considered six types of parent/school partnerships within a Site-Based Management decision-making team. The six partnership activities were:

1. Parenting skills, with an understanding of child development, home conditions for learning, and the school's understanding of its families.
2. Communications from school to home and home to school about programs and student progress.
3. The organization, schedules, and use of volunteers at and for the school, and the opportunities and schedules for audiences at school for student events.
4. Family involvement in learning activities at home, including homework, class work, curriculum-related interactions, and decisions.
5. Family involvement in school decisions, committees, school-based management, advocacy, and other practices of participation.
6. Community collaborations and resources for students, for the school, and for families.

To best serve the needs of students with classroom difficulties, either behavioral or academic, Colbert posited that the above partnership activities could be paired. For example, workshops for parenting skills could be facilitated by pairing activity one with activity six. Family outreach could be effected by making community and school resources accessible. In Colbert's model, combinations of activities ensure that parents are assisted by strategies that are designed to coordinate communication and make classroom expectations relevant.

There is an additional parental concern that affects the organization of school counseling programs. Many parents are concerned about the question of how school counseling programs influence their children. Kaplan (1996) sets out certain objections

that parents have to school counseling programs. Kaplan is an assistant principal in a middle school in Virginia, where recent legislation allowed elementary schools the option to consider funding of added academic program support, at the cost of eliminating elementary school counseling programs. It is not the intent of this portion of this study to disclaim or validate the assertions of some Virginia parents, but to report trends in national research.

In October, 1994, the Virginia Superintendent for Public Instruction required that written parental consent must be obtained before any counselor-student discussion of personal issues occurred. Several parental concerns affected and empowered the move by the Virginia Superintendent. Some parents in Virginia objected to the concept of students learning decision-making skills. They believed that truth is what parents and religious leaders state is true. This group of parents also believed that decision-making curricula in schools influenced students to make important decisions before they are ready, and undermined parental authority.

Parents were also concerned that teaching their children to make decisions based on the tenet of it making them “feel good” harmed themselves and society. Kaplan states that there is a needed reference to the individual, the family, the community, and a larger society in considering the benefits of personal decisions. Other parents were also concerned about the lack of information available to parents about the use of the techniques and materials used in small group counseling. Parents wanted to be part of the problem-solving process to make informed decisions about their children’s participation in school counseling activities.

Confidentiality of school counseling activities involving minors is another area of contention for some Virginia parents. As Kaplan stated, parents and counselors each want to act in the child's best interests. School counselors identify with the standards and ethics of the mental health profession in their attempt to provide children a safe place to privately share personal concerns. Parents want to exercise their legal parental rights to know relevant information about their children. Involving parents in designing elementary school counseling programs will foster a trusting relationship among schools, school administrators, school personnel, and parents.

Parents also have concerns regarding school guidance materials. An analysis of parental challenges to school counseling materials conducted by The People for the American Way (an organization that is opposed to school-material censorship) showed 53 challenges from 1988 to 1991 (Peterson & Poppen, 1992). Parents filing challenges objected to, in part, having their parental authority undermined by teaching children to handle problems on their own.

Parents also objected to "having teachers and untrained persons act as therapists". It appears that being sensitive to the specific needs, goals, and issues of elementary school counseling program consumers can create counseling programs that have the potential to support all constituencies, and to be responsive to perceptions of how programs should be structured.

Summary

The continued attempts by those involved in school counseling programs to define counseling roles are influenced by the interaction of school staff expectations,

legislative concerns, accreditation and professional organizations, and parental opinions.

How these influences specifically affect school counseling programs can be viewed through the way that each group focuses their attention on specific school counseling issues.

Chapter 3

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Methodology

In this study, perceptions and perspectives regarding the needs of a kindergarten through grade three school counseling program in the state of Montana were investigated. This chapter delineates the design of the study, the interview questions, subject selection, and the methods used to compile and analyze interview-based information.

Research Design

The qualitative research design of this study was chosen because of its strengths in studying the process of the field of education (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Merriam, 1998). Qualitative research allows the researcher the opportunity to gather information toward understanding concepts, rather than quantifying a singular idea or theory. In areas that need clearer definition, such as the role of the school counselor, it may allow previously unheard voices or constituencies to be heard. This study is a descriptive study describing the information collected with an interview format utilized in qualitative research.

There are several ways to define the features of qualitative research, but the researcher has chosen the features described by Bogdan and Biklen (1992, p. 29) to formulate this study. The features as they described them are:

1. Qualitative research has the natural setting as the direct source of data and the researcher is the key instrument. The focus of this study was the descriptive. Specific schools were selected and specific individuals interviewed in their work or natural settings.

The investigator's background as a school counselor was known to participants. She is a parent, a school-based confidante and consultant to principals, and a person who has taught elective courses and regularly delivers counseling curriculum in classrooms. Thus she has a bias and a professional stance regarding school counseling. The author believes her experiences allowed her, as the key instrument for collection of information, to more fully observe and understand the specific concerns of each party.

2. Qualitative research is descriptive. In this study, responses to an informal interview were collected and described, thus eliciting information that revealed more than surface reflections.

3. Qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply with outcomes or products. The study was structured to consider the interaction, or process, of descriptive data and potential meaning. The data collected was rich with reports of attitudes and how attitudes are possibly influenced.

4. Qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively. For this study, no hypothesis or theory was established prior to collection of data, and no attempt was made to gather evidence to prove or disprove an idea. Rather, abstractions and thoughts emerged from the bottom up as interviews were collected and analyzed. The goal of this study was not to develop a theory of elementary school counseling, but it does utilize data to consider what questions, commonalities and concerns have emerged from data as provided by various informants.

5. "Meaning" is of essential concern to the qualitative approach. The major inquiry of this study - what people privately think is needed in a kindergarten through grade three

school counseling program - was the focus of this research. Of special interest was how interviewees would interpret the needs and experiences of children which might be served by a counseling program. Their perspectives were explored in depth. Careful attention was given to the taking of interview notes, the tape-recording of interviews, and the typed transcription of interviews in order to ensure accurate gathering of data. Participants received their own transcribed interviews to give them the opportunity to edit or correct the transcripts before data analysis began.

Merriam (1998) defines a basic or generic qualitative study in educational research as a study that has as its major purpose the goals to discover and understand the perspectives and world views of the people involved. Findings are a mix of description and analysis, with a search for basic themes or subjectively experienced meaning. Analysis results in the identification of recurring patterns. The basic or generic qualitative study, in Merriam's interpretation, is one of the five common types of qualitative research in education. The other types are ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, and case study.

As stated in the literature review, no literature referring to the use of interviews describing kindergarten through grade three school counseling programs was revealed. This study is a basic or generic qualitative study that discovered the perspectives and worldviews of certain groups of people involved in school counseling programs. The data analysis phase provided some understanding of these perspectives, and identified some recurring patterns in responses.

Data Collection

There are three types of interviews generally used in qualitative research, although the variations may be labeled differently in different texts. These are: a highly structured interview; a semistructured interview; and an informal interview. A highly structured interview is more like the oral form of a survey. A semistructured interview is a mix of somewhat structured questions, and an informal interview is an unstructured interview which uses open-ended, flexible, exploratory questions, and can sound more like an evolving conversation.

This study employed informal interviews, with an interview protocol that contained several general questions that each interview would cover. The interview style was relaxed and conversational. Personal interaction is the largest component of interview techniques (Marshall & Rossman, 1989), with personal interaction allowing the interviewer to tell enough about themselves to be responsive to, but not intrusive into, the interview focus (Seidman, 1991).

The interviews were both content and context bound, as there were three questions delineated on the protocol that were asked in the same order for all participants. Questions were formulated during the interviews for each participant that provided additional descriptive information depending on the content evolving in the ongoing interview. Initially, there was one main question on the protocol, and several additional areas of interest. The protocol was field-tested with two people representing each of the four interview categories - a total of eight people. It was determined that the protocol

required only two areas of interest - one an orienting question and the other a closure question - in addition to the one, main research question. The protocol consisted of three specific questions given during each interview:

1. Please tell me something about your background.
2. What do you see as the needs of a K-3 school counseling program?
3. What do you see as the future of K-3 school counseling programs?

The unstructured nature of the interviews allowed interviewees the freedom to offer thoughts between questions. Participants were assured during each interview that the study was not to evaluate the specific counseling program at their respective schools, or to survey their use of their school's counseling program. Confidentiality of the participants and their home school was also assured with the use of an informed-consent document.

Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained that trustworthiness of a research study is how a researcher persuades his or her audiences (including themselves) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to and worth taking into consideration.

Trustworthiness is characterized by internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity. How these areas are represented in this study will be discussed in this section.

Internal validity deals with the question of how research findings match reality-do researchers measure what they think they are measuring (Merriam, 1998)? Merriam argues that using human beings as a primary instrument in data collection and analysis

puts the researcher closer to reality through interviews and observations, than does interjecting a data collection instrument between the researcher and the participants, thus satisfying internal validity.

The author's motivation for engaging in this study was generated by considering her own questions that arose during several years as a school counselor. What do people want me, as a school counselor, to do in school settings? The author has worked in a variety of schools in western Montana and has had diverse experiences in each. Conversations with other elementary school counselors indicated that they, also, have programs that are both diverse and similar to the author's program experiences. Some of the thoughts that we all seem to have center around what we are doing, and what others want us to do in our programs. Informally, it appears to be a topic of central concern to school counselors. The internal validity in this study is addressed by the asking of the question, "What do you think is needed in a kindergarten through grade three (K-3) school counseling program?". The validity of reality in the study is both in the asking (what do you think is needed) and in the answer (descriptions of what is needed).

Some other ways to establish internal validity are: triangulate the study; provide an "audit trail" of key decisions; and do "member checks"(Creswell, 1994). Chenail (1997) describes triangulation as the practice by which sailors determine their location by the intersection of three visual points, and relates it to qualitative research procedures. Triangulation is a term widely used in qualitative research and is defined by the use of different sets of data, different types of analyses, different researchers, and/or different theoretical perspectives to locate phenomenon for the researcher and the reader. In this

study, data was collected from twelve participants, and then contrasted, compared and analyzed among schools, and then among school roles to find categories. Data was collected in interview form from a principal, teacher, parent and counselor at three elementary schools. Data analysis occurred first among the four people from each individual school, then among school roles. Principal's responses were compared with the other principals, teachers with teachers, and so on. Different researchers were not used for data collection and analysis, but interviewee responses were discussed with other school counselors and school staff in a way that participants could not be identified. In the same way, a "reality check" occurred that reflected the experiences of other school personnel.

An audit trail was maintained in the keeping of a notebook that reported interview experiences, data organization, and study questions and decisions. Participants were sent copies of their interview transcripts with the request to view them as they related to the question of how they saw the needs of a K-3 school counseling program, as "member checks." These steps provided other sources for viewing the validity of the data.

External validity is concerned with the degree to which findings of one study generalize to other situations (Merriam, 1998). This study does not suggest that interviewee responses will generalize to other schools or programs. Instead, this study relies upon reader or user generalizability, that is, the possibility of pragmatic usefulness. Reader or user generalizability consists of leaving the degree to which a study's findings apply to other situations up to the people in those situations who read study results (Merriam, 1998).

Reliability of a qualitative study is the ability to replicate the study in another context (Creswell, 1994) and is affected by the background of the researcher (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). The author's background in schools, as noted above, was additionally influenced by the fact that the author is also certified as a school psychologist, and is a licensed clinical professional counselor (LCPC) with the State of Montana. The research question was most likely affected by the author's background and interests. The reliability of this study was established by the simplicity of the main research question, by the use of a brief interview protocol, and by the selection of specific informants. Additionally, the return of the transcribed interviews to participants insured that their conversations could be modified after the fact, in the event that the participant had more to say or no longer agreed with his or her statements upon additional reflection.

Objectivity is the impartial gathering of information, and is difficult when conducting a study in one's own field. A research methodology that utilizes multiple descriptive categories of intersubject responses (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: p. 293) at the least mitigates the question of objectivity. The same methods used to establish reliability in this study lend themselves to establishing objectivity in the data analysis. Many authors argue that objectivity, in its purest sense, is not possible in qualitative research, however rigor and systematic analysis verify results.

Selection of Subjects and Data Collection

Western Montana was selected as the area for study, and within western Montana, three schools were selected that met the following criteria:

1. One school was in the northern area, one school was in the central area, and one school was in the southern area, with each school in a different county.
2. Each school had an elementary enrollment of 300 to 500 students.
3. Each school had a K-3 population.
4. Each school had an on-site principal.
5. Each school had an existing school counseling program and a counselor on-site for the student population.

For this study, a non-random, purposeful sample population was chosen.

Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval of the study was granted the end of May, 1998, schools were selected and gatekeepers were contacted by telephone. Gatekeepers were identified after telephone calls as either a school superintendent or a school principal. Contact was established, introductions of the investigator were made, the nature and focus of the study was explained, and an agreement to participate in the study was initiated. Because the end of the school year was near, the gatekeepers were asked to identify the school counselor and to suggest several teachers and parents that could be contacted over the summer for participation in the study. In one case the gatekeeper was asked to designate a principal for contact.

Follow-up letters were mailed to the three building principals, introducing the investigator's background as a school counselor, setting out the nature of the study, the rationale for the study, and the nature of the telephone conversation held between the researcher and the gatekeeper (see Appendix D). Telephone contact was made with study participants who were identified by the principal or superintendent. In a few cases,

several parents or teachers from a specific school were contacted before consent to participate and/or interview times could be arranged. Typed schedules showing the party contacted, telephone numbers, and interview dates, times, and places were updated as needed.

In each school, a principal, a K-3 teacher, a school parent, and the school counselor were reached by telephone and an agreement was made with the researcher to meet for an interview. There were four people identified in each of the three schools: a principal; a school parent; a K-3 teacher; and a K-3 counselor. Thus twelve people participated in the study: three principals; three teachers, three school parents; and three K-3 counselors. Of the three parents agreeing to participate in the study, one was active with a parent program in the elementary school, one was an aide in the middle school whose children had attended school from kindergarten on, and one was an occasional substitute teacher in another school.

The three principals had between 15 and thirty years experience in education. One had been an elementary principle for 9 years, one had been an elementary principal for eight years, and one had been for one year. The teachers had teaching experience with K-3 age groups. for (in no particular order) thirteen years, twenty-three years and twenty-five years. Parents had varying aged children in or out of these schools. The counselors had been counseling for five, fifteen and twenty-five years. These parties represented the identified consumers and agents of elementary school counseling programs.

Interviews began in June, 1998. Scheduled meetings and meeting places were noted on an interview schedule for the study. The interview schedule continued through the end

of August, 1998. The participants chose the site for their interviews. Informed consents were read and signed by every participant (see Appendix E). Each participant was interviewed one time, with the consent and understanding that telephone contact could be made at a later date for more information. One participant was contacted after the interview for clarification of information. Interviews were taped with the consent of the interviewees, and interview notes were made by the researcher, also with the knowledge and consent of participants. The researcher toured only the school grounds of each of the schools because the schools were closed for summer maintenance.

After interviews were concluded, thank you notes were sent to each participant. Interview tapes were transcribed and typed copies were sent to participants on September 22, 1998. Cover letters attached to transcribed interviews requested that corrections or comments be made by October 30, 1998 (see Appendix F). Two participants contacted the researcher - one principal accepting the interview as transcribed, and one counselor with a request for correction. A corrected interview transcription was sent to the counselor.

The protocol used in this study asked three specific questions during each interview: "Please tell me something about your background"; "What do you see as the needs of a K-3 school counseling program?"; and "What do you see as the future of K-3 school counseling programs?".

Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

1. The information gathered in this study describes what school communities want in a kindergarten through grade three school counseling program, but the study

does not attempt to assess or critique the programs existing in the schools at the times of the interviews.

2. The study does not argue that individual perceptions are the “truth” in some absolute or objective sense.
3. Because the study selected non-random school sites in Western Montana and selected non-random study population, eliminated elementary schools with an enrollment of fewer than 300 students, and selected schools with on-site principals and on-site K-3 counselors, information was not available from other elementary school sites that did not meet this criteria. Therefore, the study does not attempt to generalize interview responses as being representative of all parents or of all elementary school personnel, even in Montana.
4. It was difficult to conduct an intensive, systematic analytic induction of collected information, due to the large volume of participant responses and due to the diverse roles of the participants.
5. Interviews were conducted during the summer, which precluded on-site visits of the schools by the researcher.
6. Designated parents had an active interest in some school activities.
7. Study results are based upon one interview with each participant.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

Data Analysis

The primary purpose of the study was to provide information to the public about the perceived needs of a K-3 school counseling program, as reported by principals, teachers, parents, and counselors. The secondary purpose of the study was to conduct research using an interview method with elementary school counseling program consumers, identifying contextual or environmental factors that may influence responses to the first question.

Information collected for this study was obtained through the manner described in Chapter 3. Three schools were selected in western Montana, and a principal, K-3 teacher, parent, and elementary school counselor were interviewed from each school. In total, twelve people were interviewed. Schools are identified in this study as School I, School II, and School III.

Responses for three interview questions were examined for all participants:

1. Please tell me something about your background.
2. What do you see as the needs of K-3 school counseling programs?
3. What do you see as the future of K-3 school counseling programs?

The responses to these questions were used to answer the research questions:

1. What do elementary school principals, teachers, parents, and counselors say is needed in a K-3 public school counseling program?

2. Are interviewee responses influenced by identifiable environmental contexts? If so, what might those contexts be?

The data was analyzed immediately after each interview. Individual interview notes were read, and an interview cover sheet was completed (see Appendix G). The researcher's reactions to the interview were written indicating what was thought to be the main focus or message of the party being interviewed. Additionally, information pertaining to relative ease or difficulty of the interview was noted. Transcription of tapes was completed by a third party after being listened to by the researcher.

Information was then filtered through analytic induction activities. After the transcripts had been sent to participants for review, typed interviews were organized by school. Each interview was read five times. Emerging themes were noted from individual interviews on 3x5 note cards. A "master list" of themes was created. Themes were combined by school and/or constituency, to look for common themes and/or differences between groups. Interviews were re-read several more times to verify what was being identified as emerging themes, and to search for themes that may have been missed. When each interview was re-read, the researcher visualized the interview setting and the interactions between the interviewer and interviewee during the interview, in order to revisit initial impressions of the nature of the meeting. Notes were made to check and re-check initial theme categories. Two larger areas of interest were identified and labeled "program content" and "program structure." Program content reflected the reported program needs of students, families, schools, and communities that appeared in

each interview. Program structure reflected the strategies that were reported by respondents for use in addressing program content.

Responses to Research Questions

The information derived from the study was very rich in descriptions of opinions that participants held about the matters affecting students and schools. Data from the study was refined to identify salient categories that could be reported for K-3 school counseling programs. Perceptions and opinions that were not used for responses to the research questions will be highlighted in Chapter 5.

Question 1: What do elementary school principals, teachers, parent and counselors say is need in a K-3 public school counseling program?

This question is answered by reporting participant responses in the areas labeled “program content” and “program structures”. Program content is the needs, goals, factors and types of issues that are addressed in a school counseling program. Program structures refer to the possible strategies used to implement a program.

Program Content

This area was divided into four sections: students; families; school; and community. Program content was represented by constituents as a problem or need in one of these four areas. Tables 1 through 3 summarize participant responses by school for program contents.

Table I summarizes the responses from School I.

Table I
School I

Program Contents	Principal Perceptions	Teacher Perceptions	Parent Perceptions	Counselor Perceptions
Students	Self-concept Social Skills Coping Skills Academic	Mental Health Coping Skills Aggression Class Interference	Self-image Decision-making Learning Probs. Nutrition	Academic Follow Rules
Families	Parenting Skills Divorce Poverty Abuse	Divorce Deaths	Parenting Skills Divorce Deaths Poverty Neglect	Parenting Skills Poverty
School	Behavior Control	Behavior Control Communication School Safety Funding	Emotional Health	Behavior Control School Safety Administration/Teacher Support
Community	Size of Town Primary Industry Type Transitory Populations	Size of Town Limited Referral Resources	Primary Industry Transitory Populations	Primary Industry Limited Referral Resources Transitory Populations

Table 2 summarizes the responses from School II.

Table 2
SCHOOL II

Program Contents	Principal Perceptions	Teacher Perceptions	Parent Perceptions	Counselor Perceptions
Students	Anger Control Academic Career Info. Drugs & Alc.	Anger Control Social Skills Follow Rules Academic	Discipline Learning Probs. Diversity	Anger Control Social Skills Frustration Communication Skills
Families	Parenting Skills Abuse	Parenting Skills	Parenting Skills Neglect Substance Abuse	Parenting Skills Abuse/Neglect Divorce Poverty
School	Behavior Control School Safety Classroom Mgmnt. Funding	Behavior Control Classroom Mgmnt. Funding	Classroom Mgmnt. Parent Meetings	Behavior Control Classroom Mgmnt Funding Ancillary Roles
Community	Mixed Nationalities	*	Mixed Nationalities	*

** Denotes that this was not a reported category in this interview.*

Table 3 summarizes the responses from School III.

Table 3
SCHOOL III

Program Contents	Principal Perceptions	Teacher Perceptions	Parent Perceptions	Counselor Perceptions
Students	Social Skills Peer Conflict Academic	Aggression Peer Conflict Academic	Self-esteem Bullying Need Nurturing	Self-esteem Peer Conflict Anger Mgmt Communication Skills
Families	Divorce Poverty	Divorce Parenting Skills Poverty	Working Moms	Divorce Teen Parenting Poverty Substance Abuse
School	Funding	Funding Classroom Mgmt.	Safety Issues	Funding
Community	Different Socio- Economic Levels	Agency Interventions	Homogeneous Community	Diverse Needs

Program Structure

The structure of programs was organized by the activities respondents perceived and reported in interviews as parts of K-3 school counseling programs. So that study results could be reported in a common language, the researcher created eight areas that represented what participants were reporting. These eight areas were: appraisal; consultation; coordination; counseling; crisis intervention; curriculum; parent education classes; and referral. The conceptualization of the eight areas was loosely identified after the researcher organized interview responses, and the areas were further refined and defined after reviewing the literature on the types of activities reported in other studies and/or in use in existing elementary school programs in other parts of the country. The fact that the researcher had to create a common language for this section indicated that study participants did not have a solid school counseling program vocabulary.

Tables were not created for these areas, but responses will be noted first by school and then by role. It was noted that respondents described many parts of the K-3 school counseling program that was in use in their own schools. It was also noted that the teacher from School II, and the parents from School II and School III expressed an interest in learning more about the services school counseling programs can offer, which suggests that school counseling programs are poorly defined for some groups, making a full response to the research question difficult.

School I

In the area of program content, the parties in School I had similar perceptions of the needs of their students, parents, school, and community. They all agreed that they wanted

their students to be successful in relating to others and in their meeting their academic goals. The issues affecting the parents in this school tended to be divorce, poverty, deaths, and the need for parenting skills. "Behavior control" and "school safety" were seen as the primary needs of the school. The factors reported for their community, such as the small size of the town, the primary type of economic industry, and transient populations impacted students, parents, and the school community in general, and also impacted the way their counseling programs were structured.

The way School I reported their program structure was also similar. All felt that some sort of appraisal activities were necessary, and that consultation and coordination were also useful. Counseling activities were similarly reported, with the exception of the parent, who felt that family counseling was needed. All reported crisis-intervention activities, and all reported some type of classroom counseling curriculum. Only the counselor reported parent education classes. Both the principal and the counselor noted referrals to community agencies.

When describing what the future of K-3 counseling programs might be, the principal and the teacher were quite similar in their perceptions. The principal anticipated that in the future, there would be an increasing need for K-3 school counseling programs to address the family/home and social problems of students. The teacher was concerned that there may be an increasing need for K-3 school counseling programs, due to more serious family issues, and due to more disturbed children. The parent saw K-3 school counseling programs working with younger students on building strong self-images, and in initiating more community involvement in counseling programs. The counselor

envisioned K-3 school counseling programs being affected by universities offering more teacher-training in counseling issues, by school counselors being involved in more one-on-one and small group counseling, and by an expectation of more consultation with parents to help students be successful at school.

School II

The participants in this school were concerned with providing ways to help students master anger control. Classroom and school behaviors were also foci. The principal was additionally interested in including career and drug and alcohol information in school counseling programs. All parties wanted to include some type of parenting skills education for school families. "Behavior Control" and "Classroom Management" were seen as the primary needs for this school. An added concern for this school was the issue of continued funding for their counseling program. Some community conflict was reported by the principal and the parent as occurring through the mixing of different ethnic populations.

In organizing their counseling program structure, all parties in School II felt some type of appraisal activities were necessary, but only the counselor noted program coordination. All parties in this school also mentioned counseling sessions and crisis intervention. However, the principal expressed a hope that other program duties would not be diluted by crisis interventions with students. The teacher and counselor included classroom counseling curriculums. The principal and parent of this school mentioned parent education classes for school families. The teacher and counselor spoke of community referrals in their interviews.

The principal was concerned that the future of K-3 school counseling programs may be influenced by increasing school violence, and may be engaged in crisis-management only. The teacher saw school funding as a big issue for the future of programs. The parent saw the future of K-3 counseling programs affected by a need to respond to greater crises with children, due to increasing poverty and social pressures. The counselor saw future K-3 programs utilizing classroom teachers in working specifically on the school behavior of students, with counseling curriculums having equal importance to academic programs.

School III

The participants from this school all spoke of the multiple programs that are available in their school building. Their responses of student-needs tended to reflect the types of programs that were currently offered. They felt their families were affected by divorce and poverty, and that school counseling programs were threatened by funding limitations. Their community was described differently by several participants. The principal and counselor felt that the diversity of socio-economic levels and different family needs impacted their programs. The parent saw their community as more homogenous. The teacher was concerned about the impact that interventions from community agencies was having on the ability of school families to take responsibility for themselves and for their children.

There was general agreement in all areas of counseling program structures with the exception of “coordination.” Only the principal mentioned coordination activities. By

report of the parties, this principal is very active in coordinating all school programs and activities.

This principal saw the future of K-3 school counseling programs in jeopardy due to deficits in school funding. The teacher envisioned programs providing a full-time counselor for every classroom, where counselor and teacher work and teach together. This parent felt that future programs would be engaged in more parenting-type nurturing responsibilities with students. The counselor thought that programs would have counselors working more like therapists/social workers, with limited classroom curriculum delivery.

Principals

The three principals all saw aspects of children getting along with others as an important part of a K-3 school counseling program. They also saw the needs of families in similar ways. Divorce, poverty, and parenting skills overlapped. Important school needs for two of the principals were "behavior control," while the third principal noted funding issues as a school need. Each principal reflected on their community needs as being characteristics of their communities - population characteristics in general. For these administrators, school concerns were a reflection of greater community issues.

There generally was agreement among the principals about the types of activities that would occur in their school counseling programs. There are a few exceptions. The principal of School I did not mention parenting education classes. The counselor from this school did note in his interview that parenting education was an area that had not yet

been fully explored by their counseling program. The principal from School II did not speak of community referrals or classroom curriculums.

Teachers

The teachers from all three schools were in general agreement about the needs of students, families, and schools, reporting counseling program needs in terms of behavior control and classroom management. Teacher I and Teacher III reported community factors impacting their schools, while Teacher II did not speak to this issue in this interview. Interestingly, all three teachers talked about funding issues for school programs.

Differences in reported program structures were indicated in a few areas. Teacher I was the only teacher to report coordination-type activities, and not to report referrals to community agencies. Teacher III alone reported parent education classes.

Parents

Responses noted from interviews with the three parents revealed that two parents wanted nurturing-type counseling activities with their students, while the third was looking for more help in terms of behavior control and academic success. Again, divorce, poverty and parenting skills were areas of concern for families. Disagreement among responses was noted for the school-needs area. Parent I saw a primary goal of the school as providing emotional health. Parent II saw classroom management and meetings with parents as a primary goal, and Parent III saw safety issues as a major concern.

Counselors

The counselors agreed upon most areas for program content. An area of dissimilarity was the “school” area. Counselors I and II spoke of behavior management activities, and Counselor II spoke of funding issues. Also, Counselor II did not mention community issues.

The counselors reported their program structures fairly similarly. Counselor III did not report coordination activities, and Counselor II did not report parent education classes.

Question 2: Are interviewee responses influenced by environmental contexts? If so, what might the contexts be?

It is difficult to ascertain for certain that interview responses are affected by environmental contexts. Environmental contexts would be community factors, such as demographics, and community location, or role factors, such as what role the participant holds in the school. However, specific community characteristics and/or role characteristics emerged during the analysis of data that could influence program creation. Findings will again be summarized first by school and then by type of interviewee.

School I

The participants from School I reported several items that could be considered environmental contexts. They reported that the size of their town, their local industry, and transient populations were community influences on counseling programs. The comments of the teacher and the counselor regarding limited referral sources may have

been affected by their perceptions of the smallness of their town. There are limited sources to which the school can make referrals for counseling outside of school.

Most elementary school counseling programs rely upon other mental health professionals in the community, to provide counseling services for students and families that would benefit from more intense therapeutic interventions. The participants from this school described their school counseling program as relying heavily upon individual school-based counseling services, perhaps due to a lack of referral sources outside the school. The most prevalent school goal-“behavior control/safety” may have been influenced by the fact that this school is located near (for western Montana) a school that had a student shooting a few years ago.

School II

An environmental context influence for School II may have been the level of aggression expressed by their students, and possible limited parent involvement. “Anger control/discipline” was repeated by all participants, as was “parenting skills”. Another contextual influence may have been the need for continued funding for their counseling programs. This school is located in a more remote area than the other two schools, and probably has a limited tax base that the school can rely upon for budgeting.

School III

Funding issues were also reported by School III. Several reporting parties in this school spoke of the effect that the State Legislature has on the continued funding of public schools in Montana. Many Montana educators feel that the State does not provide adequate state funds for local school budgets.

Principals

The role of a principal in a school is to manage the budget for school operation. They also manage building resources, including staff and educational materials. Principals are responsive to the needs of parents and teachers, and are concerned about the welfare of children in the school. In this role, a principal must be sensitive to how the school interacts with the community, and how the school is viewed by the community. Role expectations can influence how the principal views and supports the counseling program in their school.

The role of a principal as an administrator requires that they manage their school so that the school can provide education to students, much like the management goals of Total Quality Management (TQM). If students need help to behave in class, or parents want specific counseling programs offered for children, the principal must respond. If teachers are encountering difficulties in educating students, or in working with parents, the principal often looks to the school counselor to intercede and assist in mitigating the difficulties. How the difficulties are presented and perceived by the principal interact with their role as building manager, and they seek solutions. Principals can shape counseling programs to school building management requirements. The certification standards for administrators include a course on school counseling programs, so there is some awareness of what is available from a counseling program. The principals in this study used more “counseling” language in their interviews than teachers and parents.

Teachers

The role of the teacher in a school is to provide a learning environment for students, and to assist students in integrating educational information broadly defined, appropriate for their age level. Teachers spend the majority of their time in the classroom, and are responsible for managing student behavior and maintaining a productive learning environment. When the behavior of students interferes with the classroom goals of the teacher, they look for solutions. The school counselor is often contacted to assist with classroom behavior management strategies that allow students to learn. Teachers in the study spoke frequently about having counselors come into their classrooms and consult with them on how to best serve the needs of misbehaving students so that the learning environment could be maintained. "Consultation with teachers" was a topic brought up often in the study. Their experiences with counselors had been positive, and they tended to view counseling interventions in the classroom as a priority of counseling programs. Most teacher training programs do not offer classes on school counseling programs. Teachers in the study either indicated that they did not know much about actual school counseling program components, or spoke only about the components of the counseling programs that they had personal experience with.

Parents

The goal of parents in a school is to have their child receive an education. If other students disrupt their child's education, parents look for solutions. Parents also want their children to have opportunities to experience appropriate interactions with other children and adults. The amount of familiarity that they have with the school's counseling

program and with the school counselor affects whether parents involve counselors in assisting students and families. The parents in the study spoke of wanting their children to be able to have positive experiences at school, and often referred to having the counselor act much like a “surrogate parent” for students. They also indicated some lack of awareness about what services are available in school counseling programs, mainly because they had experienced little personal need for contact with the school program, and tended to view it as more crisis oriented.

Counselors

Counselors are given the task of providing a number of services to the school community. They are responsive to administrators, teachers, parents and students. While they provide many services that are tailored to the needs of their individual school, counselors rely upon the knowledge that they gained during their training. Counselors in the study used their own programs in describing what they thought was needed in a school counseling program. They may have been describing “potential” programs in a way that provided them opportunities to utilize the skills that they learned in counselor training programs.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

School Counseling and Program Roles

The literature indicates that there is still much confusion in identifying the roles of elementary school counselors. There is no definite description of what elementary counselors should do in schools. As previously stated, this study was a preliminary study that was intended to give voices to certain parties who are affected by elementary school counseling programs and who, conversely, affect what elementary school counseling programs contain.

Research studies and professional organizations have attempted to define program goals. Worzbyt and O'Rourke (1989), described the main purpose of an elementary school counseling program as one which will "enhance and improve the learning environment of the school so that each child in the elementary school has an opportunity to learn to the best of his/her capacity" (p. 13). Worzbyt and O'Rourke findings were supported in this research: a goal of all three schools, and of all the participants in the study, was the enhancement of the learning environment. For these schools, the student is the first priority. School and participant responses varied very little on what priorities are set for the students in their schools. Interpersonal skills of students were encouraged in all schools, as were academic goals.

The learning environment is of utmost importance to schools. Parents and the community look to schools to educate their children. Children cannot learn if there is not some type of order in the classroom, so that the teacher can teach and children can learn.

Orderly schools are also safe schools, where children can have the opportunity to experience success with classroom materials and with peers.

Interventions were described by the schools in this study that reflected a need of elementary schools to provide organized activities to address the social skills and conflict resolution skills of children. Study participants used words like “diversity,” “bullying” and “peer conflict” when describing how they viewed the issues affecting students in the classroom and on the playground.

Early interventions in public schools through elementary school counseling programs could help lessen the negative social impacts of bullying and peer conflict on children when they are young, rather than waiting until later school years, when the tenancy of older students is to act out their aggression if they have not been taught appropriate coping skills. A teacher in this study stated “And the younger you start, I think, the greater difference that you can probably make. When you’re trying to change a junior high or high school kid, it’s pretty tough. But if you could start in the lower grades, changing attitudes and behaviors, maybe our success rate will be much greater.” Participants also used words like student “academic success” and “successful life-long learners” for desired positive school outcomes.

Principals in the study wanted counselors to create caring, safe environments for students. They also wanted counselors to see all students, not just the ones in trouble. The current models support this also (Gysbers, 1995; Wittmer, 1993). “Normal development” and “school success” were terms used, just as they are used in developmentally appropriate counseling programs described by Wittmer (1993), and

Worzbyt et al (1989). One principal said “...sometimes even those kids who seem pretty well-adjusted have some difficulties.” While principals are responsible for ensuring that their schools educate and protect students, teachers are in the classroom doing both educating and protecting.

Teachers in the study looked to school counselors for help in their classrooms with students that disrupted the learning of other students, and with students that did not appear to have the skills, both interpersonal and academic, that would allow them to succeed in school and in life. The use of counseling in this manner with at-risk students is included in both the prevention/crisis oriented model (Faust, 1968), and the comprehensive model (Wittmer, 1993).

All the teachers in the study indicated that they are now experiencing more disruptions in the classroom from students than they had experienced earlier in their educational careers. One teacher spoke of second graders who had been suspended for fighting in the classroom and hitting staff. Another teacher spoke of children whose needs aren't being met in the classroom because their emotional needs are so great that they cannot attend to instruction. A common thread was contained in this quotation of one of the teachers: “... (there are) more and more severely emotionally disturbed kids that are coming in. I mean, it just seems like more and more kids are needing the (elementary counseling) service and ... it's a service that the schools need to provide...” While there may be research addressing children's emotional needs interfering with classroom instruction, the researcher did not review literature pertaining to the relationship between these two factors.

Parents talked about wanting counselors to be visible and on a “first name” basis with all students in the school. They wanted students to know that they could go to a counselor anytime the child had a problem. One parent saw K-3 children as afraid and scared in school. This parent said “And they’re a little scared, I think, being there all day. It’s a big step going out there to school. I think it will make a difference in how they perceive the rest of their school years, if they feel it’s a safe place.” Another parent wanted counselors to show “tender loving care” to K-3 students.

Counselors reflected a sense of responsibility to all students. A counselor in the study felt that K-3 students suffered from not having the verbal skills to express what they needed in their environment. Another counselor said they see very few K-3 students in individual settings who are having problems but prefer, instead, to work with parents in solving children’s problems at school. The counselor attributed part of the fact that she sees fewer K-3 children to smaller class sizes, and said “(smaller class sizes) really changed the focus of my counseling program...I think the teachers were able to give more individual attention to the kids that had behavior problems. They were more able to carry out behavior programs, because they didn’t have so many bodies in their classroom...I don’t think I’ve worked with a kindergartner individually for a couple years.”

While there was agreement from all parties in the study that something needs to be done to maintain learning environments and to help each child reach their potential, both personal and academic, how a program can accomplish these tasks was unclear. Elementary counselors in the study reported high levels of interactions with many of the same constituents (parents, families, teachers, and community agencies) as Hardesty et.

al., reported (1994). Participants in the study also described their ideal programs as containing high levels of counselor coordination and consultation activities, again supported by Hardesty et. al. as more prevalent in elementary school counseling programs than in middle school or high school programs.

Although the study did not attempt a comparison of elementary school, middle school, and secondary school counselor roles, the high levels of counselor interaction with parents, families, teachers, and community agencies supports the differentiation that Hardesty et. al. made in their 1994 study comparing the three school counseling grade-levels. The high levels of consultation and coordination activities reported in the study are also in agreement with the Hardesty et. al. (1994) study that saw these activities as more prevalent in elementary school counseling programs, than in middle school or secondary school counseling programs.

School counselors across the nation (Bilbrey, 1997; Hughston, et. al., 1997; Shentel, 1997), and professional organizations (ASCA, 1997), continue to create responsive programs that are viewed as meeting the needs of all children in the school environment. The use of a comprehensive school counseling model (Wittmer, 1993), was reflected in parts of all programs reported in the study. Although there were program structures described in the study that would support school environments for student success, there did not appear to be a description of a universal counseling role. Instead, it appeared that schools in the study described the role of a counselor in school counseling programs in ways that reflected their own school.

Social/Political Issues and School Counseling Programs

School counseling programs have been influenced by social, economic, and political trends (Paisley & Borders, 1995). In this study, there were multiple indicators of participants' awareness of these trends. Divorce, broken homes, and single-parent families were reported by all schools. Children were described as coming to school unfed and unbathed. Child abuse and neglect, substance abuse, and family violence were described in every community, as they had been reported by Bronfenbrenner (1986), and The Children's Defense Fund (1998).

In the study, social issues were described as the largest factors affecting the lives of children in schools, which causes family stress as related by Downing (1998). Some comments by participants were: "... because if the function of the family is to rear the children and try and help them be functional in society, I think there's a lot of families nowadays that would probably fall into that dysfunctional group.", and "(there is) too much in the jungle to deal with."

All schools reported plans to provide education to parents on parenting issues which Gerler (1991) supported. Only one reporting party, the principal of School II, described drug and alcohol education for K-3 students, which was an intervention reported by Glossoff et. al. (1990), and many others.

Legislation at the national level has been responsive to providing funds to mitigate the effects social issues have on schools. The revised *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* of 1965 had funds appropriated to provide safe and drug free schools, and to provide methods for creating parent resource centers. Respondents from all the

schools talked about using these funds in some way in their schools. The *Elementary School Counseling Demonstration Act* was proposed in 1993 to fund the training of elementary school counselors, but has not passed both Houses in Congress. The funding issues described by schools in the study reflected tax base problems at the local level of school funding, and not in obtaining funding for more elementary counselors. Schools in the study did not mention Goals 2000, and it is yet to be seen how these goals affect elementary school counseling programs at the state level.

Accreditation Programs and School Counseling Programs

Training programs and accreditation agencies ensure preparation of competent school counselors. The participants in the study related many parts of the counseling programs in-place in their own schools. This indicated that they were supportive of the skills and competencies of the elementary school counselors that they have had the opportunity to work with. The study did not assess where the counselors received their training, or which accreditation agency standards were applied, yet these results may be important to these bodies.

Counselors in the study were asked to comment on what they saw as possible additional training programs or courses for school counselors. Their answers were not considered as responses to the research questions, but are related here for general informational purposes. The researcher considered the possibility that these responses could be construed as contextual in nature (Research Question 2), as related to the community in which they were employed, but the nature of the responses indicated that they may be more universal in nature. Counselors from two schools expressed an interest

in learning more about psychotropic medication. Counselors also expressed an interest in additional training in the diagnoses of specific mental disorders, and in brief solution-focused therapeutic interventions.

Schools and School Counseling Programs

There is evidence that suggests that a strong sense of community in elementary schools benefits all who are involved with the school (Royal & Rossi, 1997) and that schools have personalities (Ellis, 1990). The sense of community expressed by each school in this study was apparent. All participants from the schools spoke of the positive ways that school staff works together to meet the needs of students. However, the sense of community expressed by the schools in the study did not identify a specific team approach, such as Site-Based Management, Total Quality Management, or Invitational Learning, but some language was used that reflected parts of each technique, such as "...I involve my staff in as much decision-making as I possibly can. Especially the things that impact the school as a whole." and "they (school counselors) are part of the team. I think it's (the K-3 counseling program) as important as the administrator or the classroom teacher."

The principals from the three schools each indicated that they thought counseling was an activity that everyone in their school engaged in. One said "So everybody (in the school) is involved in counseling in some way." Every one listened to children and worked together to seek solutions. The principals were also quick to say that counselors were the ones best trained to actually engage in counseling sessions with students.

It appeared that each school also had a “counseling personality,” perhaps created in part by environmental contexts. A principal stated “You adjust your (counseling program) needs to your community. You adjust to your school. ‘What do we need in this school?’.” The personality of School I might have been considered to be largely crisis oriented. The counselor reported that 80% of their time was spent in counseling individual students. This personality may have been shaped by the fact that it was located in a smaller community with high levels of family and student crisis due to economic conditions. The lack of local mental health referral sources could also have led to higher school-based individual counseling levels.

If a personality were identified for School II, it might have been considered to be multicultural. The mix of ethnic groups in their community may have affected the way that staff and parents communicate school expectations to students and families. Many respondents from this school expressed the need for a school counselor to be visible to the community so that families could experience a level of trust in the counseling program.

School III’s personality could have been identified as program oriented. Of the three schools participating in this study, School III reported use of more school-wide programs to address the needs of students and families.

Administrators and School Counseling Programs

In Miller’s study (1989), principals showed strong support for 24 of 28 elementary counseling functions listed on a questionnaire. Results from this study are compared to the main areas on Miller’s questionnaire.

1. **Development/career guidance:** All principals in the study supported developmental type activities. One principal noted career guidance.
2. **Consulting:** All principals in the study supported consultation with teachers.
3. **Coordination:** Two principals in the study supported coordination activities.
4. **Counseling:** All principals supported counseling meetings with students.
5. **Evaluation and assessment:** This category was labeled as “appraisal” for the study, and was supported by all principals for all students. Research plans were not reported in interviews.
6. **Guidance program development, coordination and management:** This category was not reported in interviews in the study.

Studer and Allton (1996) indicated K-12 counselors did not feel that their counseling programs were understood very well by the school principal, but that principals felt they had a good understanding and support of the counseling program. In conversations with counselors interviewed for the study, all offered that they felt their programs were generally understood and supported by their principals. However, Counselor II said that they would like to know what the principal and teachers in their school would like to see addressed in their school counseling program.

The four categories ranked highest by elementary principals for elementary counseling programs in the Ponec (1990; as cited in Dickel, 1994) study were individual counseling, classroom guidance, group counseling, and student advocate. Two principals in the current study heavily supported individual counseling. One principal included

counselor-taught curriculum in their interview. All principals supported group counseling and student advocacy.

Teachers and School Counseling Programs

Using the categories from the Miller study (1989), teachers in the current study did indicate some “developmental” services, “consulting” activities, and “counseling” sessions. They also spoke of appraisal-type activities in their perceptions of school counseling programs. “Coordination” was referred to by one teacher. The “consultation with teachers” categories rated by Morris and Hueschen (1990) in their study were generally supported by teachers in the current study. Teachers in the current study were interested in having counselors provide individual consultation to teachers for working with specific student and classroom issues, which supports the Martin et. al., (1996) study.

Parents and School Counseling Programs

Parents participating in the study were interested in having school counseling programs benefit both students and families by providing support for children at school. Two parents voiced concern over having children made to appear different than other children by taking them out of classrooms for individual counseling sessions, or for participation in “theme” groups, such as “children of alcoholics”, or “children of divorce”. Two parents also indicated that there were other parents who were not comfortable with their children seeing the school counselor, which supports the issues raised by Kaplan (1996).

Another parental concern was voiced during interviews. One parent was uncomfortable with sex education, and drug and alcohol awareness being taught to younger students. They felt that parents should educate their own children at home on these issues when they judged that their children were old enough. Another parent was apprehensive about the guarantee of confidentiality for students seeing the school counselor. The concerns of these parents would supported the Poppen, et. al., (1992) study.

In general, the current study finds support for much of the current literature regarding the role of the school counselor. This is especially true in the following areas: schools see students as the main priority in public education; parts of a comprehensive counseling program are being implemented in schools; elementary school counselors report high levels of interaction with parents, families, teachers and community agencies; elementary school principals support many of the same counseling program functions; and parents voice similar concerns about school counseling programs. Notable exceptions exist in the areas of universal school counseling roles, and in how principals understand and support school counseling programs. The current literature fails to mention whether there is any relationship between how school staff viewed school counseling programs, and whether the staff received information concerning counseling programs during their course work for state certification.

Recommendations for Further Research

Completion of the study indicated several areas of interest for further research.

1. Investigation of the effect, if any, the gender of the participants has on responses.
2. Description of information gained from role-based interviews conducted with each of the four goal-directed position, such as multiple interviews with just administrators, just teachers, just parents, or just elementary school counselors.
3. Investigation into how demographics and community characteristics affect elementary school counseling programs.
4. The effect previous counseling experiences have, if any, on how participants view contemporary school counseling programs.

Chapter 6

IMPLICATIONS

This chapter will present in a narrative format what the researcher views as the possible implications of the study for several groups.

Accreditation Bodies

Educating the nation's youth is a big responsibility for those doing the educating, and for the agencies that oversee training program standards. NCATE provides accreditation standards for the training of all educators in public schools, including administrators, teachers and counselors. Administrators receive some training regarding school counseling program components that allows them to supervise the counseling programs in their schools. Teachers are not required to take a course on school counseling.

This research suggests that teachers should be required to take at least one course providing information about potential school counseling programs and counseling curriculums in order to receive teacher certification (also supported by Bailey, Deery, Gehrke, Perry, & Whitley, 1989). Indeed, a principal in this study thought that teachers should be trained to provide counseling-type services in their classrooms - a return to "homeroom guidance," but with adequate teacher training.

CACREP standards require counseling training programs to provide education for school counselors in several broad areas that allow a school counselor to practice in K-12 schools. However, one could ask whether or not specialization of grade-level counseling degrees would be appropriate. Should counseling students-in-training be offered a degree

in “elementary school counseling” or “middle school counseling” or “secondary counseling”? The literature supports a belief that elementary school counselors provide different services to their program constituents than middle school or high school counselors. Should accreditation agencies revise their training program standards to further define a specialized degree?

The researcher sees several advantages to specialization. Elementary school counseling students-in-training could obtain specific instruction for using play therapy with young children (a suggestion of one of the counselors in the study). Counselors currently practicing in elementary schools have more contact with parents than middle school or high school counselors, due to the age of elementary school students. Parents are generally more involved in the decisions affecting their children at school in the elementary years, when the child is still young and the parent and child are just entering the educational system as a partnership. Accreditation agencies could revise training program standards to require specific elementary school counselor skills in accessing and working more directly with parents and parent groups.

There are also several disadvantages to specialization of school counseling degrees. University training programs would be required to create specific groups of courses that dealt only with elementary school, middle school or secondary school counseling. Programs would have to add additional instructors which might create an unreasonable financial burden for the training program.

Another disadvantage would be availability of employment opportunities for students-in-training after they receive their degrees. In Montana, many school districts

are structured to have grades K-8 in one building. If counseling degrees were specialized, schools would have to hire two counselors to provide services. Montana OPI standards call for a ratio of one counselor per 400 students. Many elementary schools would not have a student population that reaches 400, and would not be required to hire a counselor for their elementary school. Also, in states where employment opportunities for school counselors are sparse, a school counselor would need to be as marketable as possible, which would mean that they would need to be able to offer counseling expertise for grades K-12. Perhaps accreditation agencies could continue with K-12 training program standards while allowing individual university training programs the option to offer elective courses in areas that are defined by school counselors in each respective state.

Training Programs

Several study implications are seen by the researcher for training programs. The researcher is relying heavily upon personal counselor training experiences in judging what additional courses could be offered for school counselors. The educational background of the researcher includes studies in school guidance and counseling, school psychology, and professional private counseling. Some of the courses suggested in this section were offered to the researcher during training for certification as either a school psychologist or private counselor, but were not included in her educational training for school guidance and counseling.

Study participants mentioned that they did not have a clear idea of the possible services a school counselor could offer. One way for training programs to address this

need is to train school counselors how to introduce and market their services within a school. Specific “business-like” techniques could be taught to counselors-in-training.

Training in how to conduct a needs assessment at the school level would allow school counselors to tailor their programs to the specific characteristics of the school they work in. A counselor in the study said that he wished he had a clearer idea of what the staff in his school would like to see in a counseling program. Training programs could provide a course in how to conduct program assessment at the end of every school year so that program constituents could provide feedback and suggestions to school counselors for program efficacy.

Determination of program efficacy would provide information that school counselors could share with administrators, teachers and parents. Research methods specifically in the area of counseling programs could be taught by training programs so that the efficacy of specific program components could be established and made available to the school and the community. School counselors report that they do not know how to do research. School counseling programs would have a greater ability to show their importance in schools if they were able to provide research results that support their programs.

School counselors in the study also reported that they are requested to attend child study team (CST) meetings and individual education plan (IEP) meetings. The revised Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) requires the addition of behavioral goals, if needed, in the IEP’s created for students receiving special education services. Behavioral goals are written with the expectation that counseling programs will provide

the necessary services. School counselors report that they do not receive training in special education laws or issues. Special education issues are another area that could be added to courses offered in training programs.

All schools in the study mentioned counseling curriculums for classrooms. School counselors are expected to either purchase programs that they or the classroom teacher can deliver in the classroom, or create their own. Counseling curriculums are expensive, and many publishers do not provide research support for efficacy. Schools struggling with limited budgets seldom have the funds to purchase packaged curriculums. Curriculum creation then falls to the school counselor, who often borrows ideas from other counselors. In order to teach the curriculum in the classroom, the counselor must be able to establish a scope and sequence of the target topics.

Scope and sequence are teaching terms, and teachers obtain curriculum training for teacher certification. School counselors do not. School counselors in Montana were previously required to have teaching experience prior to certification. This requirement was eliminated in 1994. School counselors trained after this date in Montana are no longer required to have teacher training (there are some other exceptions to school counselor certification and prior experiences, but they are not discussed in the study). Training programs could offer courses in classroom teaching techniques, and perhaps even require a short “student teaching” experience in internship experiences.

Classroom control is another issue that affects school counselors in the classroom. Many counselors do not know how to provide a discipline/behavior control structure in the classroom, and have difficulty gaining the respect of classroom teachers if the class is

out of control during the time the counselor is teaching counseling curriculums. In fact, many counselors do not feel comfortable conducting classroom discipline and feel that being seen as a disciplinarian by students is detrimental to their role and image as a student advocate. It is generally agreed, however, that providing good boundaries and appropriate expectations for student behavior models a powerful message for students. This does not mean that counselors should mete out punitive measures, but does suggest that school counselors could benefit from specific additional training and/or courses on how to maintain classroom control.

Other specific areas of additional course-offerings for training programs came from the program needs/content reported by study participants. Divorce, poverty, abuse and neglect were social issues mentioned in the study. Training programs that the researcher is familiar with do offer training in providing appropriate counseling services to families, but specific training on how to counsel families and students affected by divorce has not been offered. Poverty, abuse and neglect are discussed in training classes, but specific ways to ameliorate their effects on families and students is not.

Professional Organizations

Training programs are only one way for counselors to receive counseling knowledge. Professional organizations also offer regional and national training conferences. These organizations must focus on a deeper understanding of contemporary issues and their place in the school setting.

Professional organizations, such as ASCA, conduct counselor training classes at professional conferences. They could also offer seminars to school counselors in many of

the areas suggested for training programs. The counselors in the study did not mention professional affiliations. It has been observed that many school counselors do not belong to professional organizations. Counselors may have a lack of awareness of the benefits that they could gain from professional affiliations. The Montana School Counseling Association (MSCA) is the state affiliate of ASCA. The researcher is the president-elect for MSCA, and will take office in the year 2000.

Every community in the state of Montana has unique characteristics. Professional organizations could better serve school counselors, and school counselors would be more aware of the benefit of professional affiliation, if organizations regularly provided regional conferences that addressed the unique needs of counselors within specific regions. Ideas for training seminars could be selected by periodically polling school counselors within a region.

Professional organizations are proposing universal counseling program standards for school counseling programs across the nation. Specific categories are suggested for inclusion in every counseling program and school counselors are encouraged to place the standards into practice in their school districts and in their schools. While this is a worthy goal, results from the study indicate that the acceptance of universal standards may be difficult for some school counseling programs. Counselors in the study expressed a need to create and manage their own programs in a way that was most responsive to the specific needs of their school and community. Because of their focus on the uniqueness of their particular schools, they did not mention many of the components of the universal standards proposed for school counseling programs by professional organizations.

Acceptance of universal school counseling standards would imply that all standards would be implemented and that “one size fits all”. School counselors would most likely be reluctant to obligate themselves to program components that they or their communities may not be able to support.

Montana OPI requires school districts to update their curricula every three years, including counseling curricula. The researcher has served on advisory committees that revised her county counseling curriculums. The most recent revision took the universal standards into account and included them in the creation of the current counseling curriculum. School counselors serving on the curriculum advisory committee voiced a concern that many schools do not have the counseling budget or school personnel to meet all the goals of the universal standards. They also voiced a concern that putting the standards into the curriculum implied compliance with the curriculum.

There is momentum across the state and the nation to create universal curriculum standards in other educational content areas, such as science, math and english. While this may be a useful method for creating a common role identity for school counselors across the nation, difficulties exist as to how to build in the necessary flexibility that is needed to apply universal counseling standards responsive to local-level school districts. Perhaps professional counseling organizations need to work closely with other education organizations proposing national curriculums to coordinate and share information that is helping and/or hindering their efforts, and consider how other education organizations are addressing the issue of local uniqueness.

Schools/Communities/Families

Study participants reported that they were concerned about student growth and development, classroom management, parenting needs, and community characteristics. Each of these areas influences the creation of school counseling programs appropriate for their schools.

The message that participants related in the study was that they had specific ideas about what they would like a school counseling program to address. However, the methods used to address ideas varied in importance across schools and constituencies. Schools are not only communities in themselves, they are also part of the community where they are located, a belief supported by the study. The “ownership” of the counseling program does not reside only with the school counselor. Nor is it possible to argue that in school counseling programs, “one size fits all.”

Administrators, teachers, parents and community members can play a significant role in addressing the issues affecting their students. They can communicate their concerns by offering to serve on school advisory committees that shape programs in their schools, including counseling programs. They can ask what their school counseling program offers, and take the time to understand it.

School staff and community members can take steps to ameliorate some of the specific family and community issues that burden their students. Those communities that do not have adequate mental health referral sources outside of the school can make an effort to bring additional services to their town. The school can work with parents to offer outreach programs to offer help to families experiencing substance abuse and child

neglect. A counselor in the study expressed a concern that school communities may become too intrusive in the lives of families outside of their school, and felt that problems of children might best be addressed in the school building and not by interfering in the home. Results from the study indicated that school staff and parents are genuinely distressed by what is happening in the homes of some students. School staff and parents are also members of their communities. The principals in the study said they viewed everyone in school as counseling students in some way. The researcher believes everyone in the community is counseling students in some way. Everyone in the community also has an opportunity to get to know their school counseling program, and an opportunity to impact the mental health of the whole community, both in and outside of the school.

Counselors

Counselors in the study were aware that they were subject to job “burn-out” if they did not balance their roles in their schools. They spoke of wearing many hats, and some ancillary duties were mentioned. Roles mentioned by counselors appeared to function in parallel with the roles that other school personnel perform. Counselors and administrators indicated that they worked closely together to monitor student progress and behavior in their schools. Counselors taught with teachers in the classroom. Parents saw counselors as “surrogate parents”. Counselors saw themselves in all these roles, and in the additional roles of therapists, social workers and para-educators. It also seems feasible to add paralegal and school nurse to the list of counselor roles.

Review of the literature for the study revealed that prior studies used surveys or questionnaires as a source of data collection. The number of items presented for rating on

the surveys and questionnaires was overwhelming to the researcher, as were the comments made by Brantley (Cormany et al, 1996) about what he felt counselors should do. There was also an impressive volume of responses regarding program needs reported in interviews for the current study. Are elementary school counselors being asked by counseling program constituents to do too many or too diverse activities?

School counselors can take the lead in defining their role by educating school staff and parents about the components of their programs. In-services and “get acquainted with the school counselor” programs can be conducted by school counselors in their schools. Pamphlets describing the program can be made available as a resource to staff and parents. Counselors can also take the lead in organizing a counseling program team to advise them in program decisions. The team approach is supported in the literature, and the researcher has attended seminars suggesting that school counselors form a program team to share program ownership.

Legislation/Funding

Legislation concerning school counseling at the national level has tended to be in the form of setting goals for schools to attain in serving the social and emotional needs of their students. The researcher attended a lobbying conference in Washington, D.C. in March, 1999 hosted by ASCA. She received training on how to lobby Congress for funds to be used to educate more school counselors, and on how to lobby for inclusion of the term “school counselor” in legislation currently before Congress. State senators and state representatives were met with to share school counseling information. This was a

valuable experience for the researcher, who hopes to be able to create a lobbying effort with other Montana school counselors at the state level, the benefit of which will be explained below.

Lobbying efforts in Montana may be best focused toward funding for school counselor positions in elementary schools, and for school funding in general, rather than toward funding for the training of more school counselors. Many study participants felt that the future of school counseling programs was in jeopardy due to limited school district budgets. A principal remarked that when budgets are cut, school boards look at “expendable” positions. Schools have to have janitors, teachers, principals, and bus drivers. But many school boards do not feel that school counseling programs are necessary. They may feel that the role of a school is to educate, not counsel, students. Study results indicate that schools are counseling students and families every day, and in great numbers. States can assist local school districts in maintaining elementary school counseling programs by providing state funds that allow schools to fund counseling positions, that are not at the expense of other programs.

Appendix A

American School Counselor Association Standards

I. Academic Development

Standard A: Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the life span.

Standard B: Students will complete school with the academic preparation essential to choose from a wide range of substantial postsecondary options, including college.

Standard C: Students will understand the relationship of academics to the world of work, and to life at home and in the community.

II. Career Development

Standard A: Students will acquire the skills to investigate the world of work in relation to knowledge of self and to make informed career decisions.

Standard B: Students will employ strategies to achieve future career success and satisfaction.

Standard C: Students will understand the relationship between personal qualities, education and training, and the world of work.

III. Personal/Social Development

Standard A: Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect self and others.

Standard B: Students will make decisions, set goals, and take necessary action to achieve goals.

Standard C: Students will understand safety and survival skills.

Appendix B**Administrative Rules of Montana****10.58.512 GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING K-12** For the prospective counselor

the program shall provide:

- (1) the completion of a master's degree in counseling or the equivalent;
- (2) evidence that careful screening throughout the program is employed to assure that persons have demonstrated competence as student advocates in consulting with students, teachers, administrators, parents and agencies;
- (3) opportunities to understand the philosophy, theories, organization, time management, and professional activities related to the practice of school counseling K-12;
- (4) opportunities to demonstrate competence in developing relationships with community, public, private, medical and educational agencies and other services for referral and collaborative service delivery;
- (5) opportunities to understand individual growth and development within family and social environments including the dynamics of human behavior and of human development theory and research;
- (6) opportunities to understand basic educational philosophies, curriculum development, and school organization and management;
- (7) opportunities to understand and appreciate societal forces and cultural diversity such as socio-economic, religious, ethnic, and racial groups;

(8) opportunities to demonstrate competence in elementary, middle and secondary counseling in the following areas:

(a) planning, implementation, administration, and evaluation of counseling curricula and programs;

(b) principles of appraisal and interpretation of interviews, history taking, observations, and formal assessments (intelligence, aptitude and interest, achievement, and personality tests);

(c) assisting students in developing personal, social, educational, and life career planning and decision-making skills;

(d) individual, family and group counseling including the design, implementation and application of developmental, preventive, remedial and adjustment strategies and services;

(e) consultation with families and others regarding assessment and intervention to enhance students' academic, social, cognitive, psychological and physical functioning;

(f) drug and alcohol prevention/intervention programs, suicide, eating disorders, child abuse and neglect, teenage pregnancy, human sexuality, family relations, grief/separation/loss, student drop-outs, gender-equity, and crisis intervention;

(g) performance, evaluation, and use of educational research;

(9) opportunities to gain knowledge of special education rules and regulations and demonstrated competence in the knowledge of special needs and developmental issues of exceptional students and their families;

(10) opportunities to gain knowledge of state and federal laws, and school

accreditation standards, including those laws and regulations that affect student placement, follow-up and program planning;

(11) opportunities to demonstrate competence in the knowledge of legal and ethical issues of school counseling;

(12) opportunities to demonstrate competence in career counseling, including career development theories, written materials, technologically-assisted information, assessment and decision-making methods; and

(13) opportunities to complete a supervised counseling practicum and internship experience including observation, practice, and performance of counseling and the other duties of a school counselor with the following requirements;

(a) the counseling practicum must total a minimum of 100 hours, including 40 hours of direct client contact offering counseling services;

(b) the counseling practicum must be supervised a minimum of one hour per week in an individual session and one and one-half hours per week in a group session by graduate program faculty;

(c) the internship must consist of a minimum of 600 hours in a school or school-related setting;

(d) the internship must include 240 hours of direct client contact offering counseling services; and

(e) the internship must be supervised a minimum of one hour per week in an individual session and one and one-half hours per week in group sessions by a master's degree school counselor or graduate program faculty.

Appendix C

Partial CACREP Standards

- 1. Human Growth and Development - studies that provide an understanding of the nature and needs of individuals at all developmental levels.**
- 2. Social and Cultural Foundations - studies that provide an understanding of issues and trends in a multicultural and diverse society.**
- 3. Helping Relationships - studies that provide an understanding of counseling and consultation processes.**
- 4. Groups - studies that provide an understanding of group development, dynamics, counseling theories, and group counseling methods and skills.**
- 5. Career and Lifestyle Development - studies that provide an understanding of career development and the interrelationships among work, family, and other life factors.**
- 6. Appraisal - studies that provide an understanding of individual and group approaches to assessment and evaluation.**
- 7. Research and Program Evaluation - studies that provide an understanding of all aspects of professional functioning including history, roles, organizational structures, ethics, standards, and credentialing.**

Appendix D

Letter to Designated Gatekeeper

Dear _____,

I am a doctoral student at The University of Montana in school guidance and counseling. I am also a school counselor in the Missoula area. My dissertation goal is to report what people think is needed in Kindergarten through Grade Three (K-3) school counseling programs. A school was selected in northwestern Montana, west-central Montana, and southwest Montana. Your school was selected for its location in one of these geographic areas.

The information from my study will describe what is needed in K-3 school counseling programs through interviews and may be a beginning for future research with other schools. The focus of the interviews will be: "How would you describe what is needed in a K-3 school counseling program?". All personal and location information will be reported on an anonymous basis.

The people that I would like to interview in your school are an administrator, a K-3 teacher selected by staff, the building counselor, and a parent selected by the building Parent/Teacher Association - a total of four people from your school. I would like to interview all parties during this summer of 1998, at their convenience. Each personal interview will take about thirty to forty minutes, and I will travel to a mutually agreed upon place of each party's choice. All parties will need to sign an informed consent which I will provide, and which will allow for withdrawal from selection at any time. Interviews will be tape recorded, and transcripts will be sent to respective parties for their approval of responses. Results from this study will also be sent to you upon completion of my dissertation.

I will be contacting you by telephone by the end of this week to ask if your school will participate in this study, and to answer any questions that you might have. If you feel there are other individuals that I should contact prior to your decision to participate, I will get their names from you at that time. I thank you and your staff for your consideration of this project.

Cordially,

Sally Woodruff, Ed.S.

Appendix E

Research Study Consent Form

This form indicates your consent to participate in a research project that will describe the needs of public school counseling programs in grades K-3. Administrators, school counselors, teachers, and parents will be interviewed. Once their responses have been analyzed, their comments will be organized to view information among schools, and among participating groups. Your understanding of the following facts is necessary prior to participation in the project.

1. Interviews will be audio-taped and transcribed in their entirety. All identifying information - such as your name, and your school name and location - will be removed from the transcript. To insure anonymity, you will be provided with a copy of the completed transcript and invited OT review it and make any changes or corrections deemed necessary for school and personal anonymity. Any and all parts of this interview may be quoted in published reports of this research. At the conclusion of this research project, audio-tapes will be destroyed. Transcripts of interviews will become part of the final report.
2. Responses will be organized by participating schools and by participating groups. Conclusions will be compared to findings in current research literature.
3. Although I do not foresee any risks, the following paragraph is required to be included in all consent forms for University approval. In the event that you are injured as a result of this research you should individually seek appropriate medical treatment. If the injury is caused by the negligence of the University or any of its employees, you may be entitled to reimbursement or compensation pursuant to the Comprehensive State Insurance Plan established by the Department of Administration under the authority of M.C.A., Title 2, Chapter 9. In the event of a claim for such injury, further information may be obtained from the University's Claims Representative or University Legal Counsel.
4. Inquiries concerning the methods or outcomes of this study may be addressed to Sally Woodruff, Department of Counselor Education, 724 Eddy Street, Missoula, MT, 59812. The contact telephone number is 406.243.5252.
5. You are free to withdraw consent or to discontinue participation from this project at any time.

Your signature indicates that you understand the above statements and that you consent to participate in this research project.

Participant Signature and Date

Researcher Signature and Date

Appendix F**Transcripts Letter**

Dear _____,

The transcripts are finally done. I am enclosing your copy of our interview. Please read over your interview and make corrections/deletions where you would like. I will be using these interviews to answer the basic research question of what people would like to see in a K-3 counseling program, and will not use personal information or specifics about you and/or your school. You do not need to return your copy to me, unless you have changes that you would like made. If you have changes, please copy the page(s) that you have amended and send to me at the address above, or you can give me a call and I will make changes based upon your directions, and send any new page(s) as needed.

Once again, I would like to thank you for your participation in my dissertation preparation. I will send condensed results to you when completed. My hope is to compile results this fall, so if you have changes to your interview, please contact me by October 30, 1998, to make any changes. I trust that the school year has started on a positive note for you. Thank you again.

Cordially,

Sally Woodruff

enclosure

Appendix G**Interview Cover Sheet**

Name/Gender/Approx. Age _____

City/Site _____

Phone _____

Other Info. _____

Highlights from interview:

Major Points:

Quotable Quotes:

Things to Follow-up on:

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